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# PRESERVATIVE AGAINST POPERY,

IN SEVERAL

*Select Discourses*

UPON THE

PRINCIPAL HEADS OF CONTROVERSY

BETWEEN

PROTESTANTS AND PAPISTS:

BEING WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED

By the most eminent Divines of the Church of England,

CHIEFLY IN THE REIGN OF KING JAMES II.

COLLECTED BY

THE RIGHT REV. EDMUND GIBSON, D.D.

SUCCESSIVELY LORD BISHOP OF LINCOLN AND LONDON,

[B. 1669, D. 1748.]

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BY

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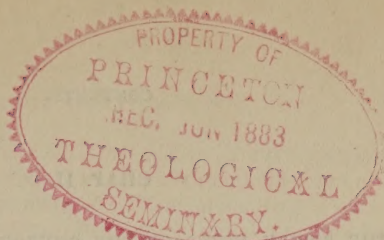
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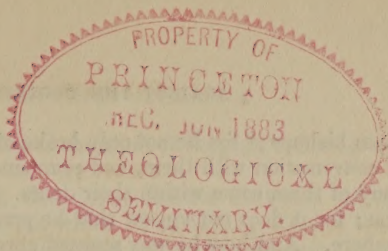


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## THE PAPAL SUPREMACY.

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### CHAP. I.

#### THE PAPAL SUPREMACY A NOVEL DOCTRINE,

IN A DISCOURSE, ENTITLED, CONSIDERATIONS TOUCHING THE TRUE WAY TO SUPPRESS POPERY IN THIS KINGDOM, ETC.

HE that, laying aside prejudices, shall look impartially into the Scriptures, and into the undoubted records of the primitive Church, shall find no foundation for that prodigious fabric of the Papacy. For the first three hundred years after Christ he will find only two, namely Victor and Stephen, that took upon them to censure any which were not of their diocese. And though their censures (for ought that appears) were only declarations of non-communication, such as any bishop in those days might send forth against the Bishop of Rome, as well as he against other bishops; yet we find that, even for that, they were blamed and condemned by other bishops. And that is all the effect that we read their censures had in any place out of Rome itself. Pope Victor, in his censure of the Asian bishops, is thought not to have gone beyond threatening to break communion with them, and endeavouring to persuade other bishops to do the same. And yet for this he was smartly handled by some of the brethren: and it is charitably thought he was set right by the grave counsel\* of Irenæus, who writ to him in the name of the Gallican Church, and told him he did not learn this of any of his predecessors. Of Pope Stephen it is certain that he went farther in his quarrel with the Asian and

\* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. v. 24. Vales. in Locum. [p. 105. C. D. Paris. 1659.]

African bishops;\* for he not only broke off communion, but all civil conversation with them, and commanded his people not to let any of them come within their doors. But this was only at Rome; for it does not appear that he pretended any authority elsewhere. And how he was scorned abroad for his pride and folly in this, the reader may see in those two excellent Epistles,† the latter of which was left out of the Roman edition of St. Cyprian; and Pamelius honestly declares he would have stifled it, if others had not published it before him.

Lest any one should take offence at my not giving the usual garnish of the Popes of that age to those two whom I have mentioned (for I dare not call them saints and martyrs, though the Roman Church does, both elsewhere, and in her Offices on their days‡), I ought to let him know how that Church is abused by them that have gained no small advantage to themselves by such fictions. That the old Roman Church in the time of Constantius knew nothing of either of their martyrdoms, it appears by her catalogue of Popes, published first by Cuspinian, and since by Bucherius the Jesuit. Nay, she knew the contrary of one of them; for in the Roman calendar of that age, published by the same Jesuit, Victor is not mentioned at all, and Stephen is among the Popes that were no martyrs. If this proof were not enough, or if this place were proper for it, I should shew from good authors, that though these Popes lived under Emperors that were afterwards persecutors, yet they died before the beginning of their persecutions. I do not say but they may be saints: but if they are, it is more than we have any ground to believe; for neither the church history, nor any writer within an hundred years of their time, has any more of their sanctity than of their sufferings. Of Stephen there is great cause to doubt the contrary, from what we read of him in St. Cyprian's Epistles;§ and more from that of Firmilian,|| which is thought to have been translated by St. Cyprian, and

\* Firmilian's Epistle among Cyprian's Epist. 75. p. 166. edit. Rigaltii. [p. 150. Paris. 1726.]

† Cypr. Epist. 74 et 75. [Indignor apertam et manifestam Stephani stultitiam quod qui sic de episcopatus sui loco gloriatur et se successorem Petri tenere contendit super quem fundamenta Ecclesiæ collocata sunt, multas alias petras inducat et ecclesiarum multarum nova edificia constituat. p. 148. Paris. 1726.] Vide Rigalt. in Cyprian. Epist. 75. [Vide Stephani Baluzii notas in Ep. 75. p. 508. Paris. 1726.]

‡ July 28, and August 2.

§ Cyprian. Ep. 74 et 75.

|| Rigalt. Obs. in Ep. 75. [et Baluzii notas in Ep. 75.]



which was written\* about the time of Stephen's death, rather after than before it.

It is to be hoped, that many Roman Catholics among us have truly that reverence which all of them profess to have to true primitive christian antiquity, and to the judgment of saints and martyrs in all ages. We all agree that Irenæus and Cyprian had a just right to those titles. And Firmilian was a chief pillar of the Church in his age: he was thought worthy to preside in several Eastern Councils; namely, in that against the Novatians, before Stephen was pope, and those against Samosatenus, after Stephen was dead: and, after his own death, the Eastern† Church of that age called him 'Firmilian of blessed memory.' Why this man is not in the calendar of saints, they best know who can tell us why Victor and Stephen are there: no doubt the saint-makers do all things with great consideration. But can any one imagine, that those excellent men did ever believe themselves to be under the Roman bishop? that they owed any obedience to him whom they schooled so; or any reverence to his censures which they slighted in that manner? Could any assurance of their cause have justified that contempt of authority, if they had known any in him? But it appears they knew it not; nor did others in that age. Those that were against them in the cause, blamed them for that, and nothing else; and yet held communion with them, for all Pope Stephen and his censures. So far, it appears, those great men had the judgment of the Church on their side. They knew of no authority over the Universal Church that the Pope had, more than any other bishop, by any right, whether divine or human.

What the judgment of the Church was in the next centuries, let them consider that shall read those canons,‡ and remember

\* Almost twenty-two years after the reign of Alexander Severus. Cyprian. Epist. 75. p. 160.

† In their Synodical Epist.

‡ See in the Codex Canonum Universalis Ecclesiæ, or in the Councils; Concil. Nicen. I. can. 6. [Labbe, vol. 2. p. 35. Venetiis, 1728.] Concil. Constant. I. can. 2. [Ibid. p. 1125.] Concil. Ephes. I. can. 8. [Labbe gives only six canons. The eighth may be found in Balsamon's collection, Paris. 1620, p. 319. Labbe remarks, vol. 3. p. 805. (Paris. 1671) as the reason of his omission of canons 7 and 8:—"Causam hanc fuisse arbitror quod non universæ Ecclesiæ decreta visa sint Latinis, sed in peculiari ac privata Nestorii ejusque fautorum causa canones pro re duntaxat nata a Patribus Ephesinis constituti." Concil. Chalced. can. 28. [The 28th and following canons, says Labbe—"Non extant in codicibus Græcis manuscriptis quos habuimus hujus Concilii nec etiam

they are such as passed in the first four General Councils, and in the African Council of 217 bishops (of whom St. Austin was one) assembled at Carthage: to which I add the African Church's epistle to Pope Cœlestine I., as containing a full declaration of their mind in that canon. I know there are objections against one or two of these canons; but all the dust that has been raised will not hinder any reasonable man from seeing that which, I think, is sufficient for our purpose, namely, that all the Fathers that sat in those Councils, or at least the major part of them, were of the same judgment with those above-mentioned in this point of the authority of the Bishop of Rome. They all allowed him precedency, as being bishop of the imperial city. They had commonly a great deference to his judgment in debates between themselves. And sometimes the Christian Emperors made him honorary judge, whether alone or with others, in such controversies. Indeed, by the canons of Sardica, those few\* western bishops that continued there, after the easterlings had left them, were pleased merely of their charity to give him a new power, to order the reviewing of any provincial judgment upon complaint of any bishop that was aggrieved in it. And Pope Leo, not being satisfied with this, got the Emperor Valentinian III. to ordain† that the Bishop of Rome should give law throughout his part of the empire (which then contained little more than Italy, and part of France, and part of Spain, and the Illyrian diocese). Yet all that the Bishop of Rome had by these concessions and grants, did not amount to an authority over the Universal Church: I add—nor over the British Church‡ in particular. And so far

in Latinis neque in collectionibus Dionysii et Isidori." vol. 4. p. 768. Lut. Par. 1671.] Together with Act. 16. of that Council. Concil. Afric. can. 31 in the Greek, or 72 and 92 in the Latin. Epist. ad Cœlestinum, which is at the end of that Council.

\* The Western and Eastern bishops together were 170, saith St. Athanasius (who was one of them). Ad Solit. vitam agentes. tom. i. 818. [Ad Monachos, vol. 1. par. 1. p. 278. n. 15. Patav. 1777.] Of the Eastern, 73 declared against the Western bishops. Hilar. Frag. p. 448: and some were neutrals. [vol. 2. p. 664. Veron. 1730.]

† By his Novel, dated An. 445, June 6. Vid. Leo I. Epist. 89. [Lab. vol. 3. p. 1401. Lut. Par. 1671.]

‡ There were no British bishops at the Council of Sardica; as appears by the inscription of the Synodical Epistle, Athan. tom. i. p. 756. [vol. 1. par. 1. p. 132. Patavii, 1777. et Lab. Conc. vol. 2. p. 707. Venet. 1728.] and by the subscriptions, both of the Synodical Epistle, Hilar. Frag. col. 408; and of the Canons in the edition of Isidorus Mercator. Though the British bishops, or some of them, did afterwards approve of the Council's

was this from arguing that he had by Divine right any jurisdiction out of his own diocese, that his seeking or accepting what was given him by these concessions or grants is a convincing argument to the contrary. But for the Church's judgment, nothing can be more plain, than that all those bishops who gave their votes to those canons which I cited before out of the first four General Councils, and that of Afric, together with the epistle annexed, had no question or thought of any authority that he had by Divine right out of his own proper diocese, or by human right out of the Roman patriarchy, or any power of jurisdiction that he had elsewhere from the Roman Emperors or from the primitive Fathers.

Whatsoever power he has gotten since the decay of the Roman empire and of the Christian religion (from whence I have already\* dated the beginning of Popery), as it is plain he has gotten in many countries which were not anciently within his jurisdiction upon any account, it must be either by force or fraud, abusing either the weakness or ignorance of the people, or else by the concession or connivance of princes and states. Blessed be God, there are some Christian nations in the world, which have stood so far out of his reach, that he has not been able to hook them in by any of these ways. And as he has no colourable pretence to a power over those countries, where it is certain he never had any, as Ethiopia, Russia, &c. (which they that are pleased to call therefore 'schismatical,' must give me leave to admire as well their folly as their uncharitableness : and yet they that do not call them so, make the Pope no head of the Universal Church) ; so in those countries where he has gotten power, it is not necessary that he should always hold it till we see who is Antichrist, whether he, or one of the tribe of Dan, who (they say) shall come to take it from him. They over whom he gained a power by force or fraud, are kept under it still the same way ; which creates no right by any law whatsoever. And therefore when God makes them strong enough and wise enough, they will deliver themselves from him. They

judgment in the case of St. Athanasius, Ath. tom. 1. p. 720. [vol. 1. par. 1. p. 98. ut supra] (where note, the translation is false.) And as for that law of Valentinian III., it was not made till after Britain was forsaken by the Romans ; which was Theodosii 18. (or anno 440,) saith Prosper Pithæi ; anno 443, saith the Saxon Chron. [Anno 435. p. 11. Oxon. 1692. Hoc anno Gothi expugnabant Romæ urbem nec unquam postea Romani regnabant in Britannia.] Theodosii 23. (or anno 445,) saith Beda, Hist. 1. 13. [vol. 2. p. 67. Lond. 1843.]

\* P. 4, 5, &c.



that gave him a power over them when they saw cause, may have as good or better cause to recall it. And they have just cause to do this, when they see him desert that title by their gift, and claim his power by immediate Divine right; or when he employs his power "not to edification but destruction:"\* and especially when, doing all this, he will force their obedience by such means as come not from the "wisdom which is from above,"† but from that which the Apostle calls "earthly, sensual, devilish."

Whosoever among our Roman Catholics will be pleased to consider these things with that attention and impartiality that is due to all things of religion, I cannot but think he will see, that the Christian religion doth no way oblige him to own the Pope's authority in this kingdom.

He will see, that *jure Divino* the Pope could have no authority over this particular Church, which he had not over the Church Universal. And it doth not appear by any records of the primitive times, that the Pope ever had any such authority over the Universal Church, or that by the diffusive Church he was believed or acknowledged to have it.

But, on the contrary, it appears by instances which I have given of those times, that he was denied to have such an authority, and that as well by the bishops assembled in their Councils, as by the best and wisest men of those times in their writings: nay, he was contradicted and resisted as oft as he endeavoured to impose any thing against the mind of particular Churches.

He will see, that whatsoever human right the Pope had acquired over the people of this kingdom, was no more of one kind, than we are all originally of one nation; and that the power which he was suffered to exercise over us, was very much greater at one time than another. In the worst and darkest of times it was highest, for it grew up on the bad titles or other weakness of princes;‡ and yet then he could not hold it peaceably, nor long enough to make a prescription. But at all other times it was much less than he claimed; which sheweth plainly it was no more but what the state pleased to give him: and they owned that the Pope had no right over them by any concessions of their own, more than what he had over the rest of the Western Churches.

Particularly in those times next before the Reformation, that

\* 2 Cor. x. 8.

† James iii. 15.

‡ From King Stephen to Henry III.

right which was generally acknowledged to be in him, was not a supreme right, but subordinate to a General Council.

This appears to have been the sense of the Western Church. For it was declared in plain terms by four General Councils,\* which were acknowledged for General in that age, and were abetted as such by the generality of the Western Church. They not only declared this doctrine in their canons, but they reduced it to practice; for those Councils deposed divers Popes,† and made new ones in their stead. Which acts of theirs the Papalins of this age are obliged to defend, as ill as they like the canons; for without them they cannot make up the succession of their present Popes. But admitting those acts to have been just and good, how can they reject those canons from which they had their virtue and efficacy? If they say the Pope did not approve them, it is partly true. Out of doubt those Popes did not like them that lost by them. Nor, perhaps, those that came in by those canons might not like them so well at another time. But how then could they take upon them to be Popes? Their accepting a title from those Councils, and the people's owning them in it, was enough to shew that those canons were then in force; and they were never repealed by any Council since; nor hath there been any Council to do it, that can be reasonably thought so fit as those four were, to declare the sense of the Western Diffusive Church.

\* Pisa, Constance, Sienna, and Basil.

† Greg. XII. and Benedict XIII. and John XXIII.

## CHAP. II.

THE TEXTS EXAMINED WHICH PAPISTS CITE OUT OF THE BIBLE, TO PROVE THE SUPREMACY OF ST. PETER AND OF THE POPE, OVER THE WHOLE CHURCH.

## THE FIRST PART.

THE question to be debated in this paper is, whether the Apostle St. Peter was constituted by Christ himself to be, in his stead, the Head and supreme Governor of the whole Church? This *we* deny, having undeniable proofs that all the Apostles were placed by Christ in equal power and authority over his Church. But the doctors of the Roman Church affirm this with so much confidence as to say, that to deny it is "not a simple error, but a pernicious heresy." These are the words of Bellarmine;\* who earnestly contends, that the government of the whole Church was committed to Peter, especially about matters of faith.

Which bold assertion he labours to support three ways.

First, By some places of Holy Scriptures.

Secondly, By many privileges and prerogatives of St. Peter.

Thirdly, By testimonies of Greek and Latin Fathers.

I am concerned only in the first of these ways; in which if this cause find no true support, we need not trouble ourselves about the other two; which are so weak, that some ingenuous persons in their communion have acknowledged, the Prerogatives are either feigned at pleasure, or no more to the purpose of his supremacy than the pretended testimonies of ancient Fathers which are against it.

Now the Scriptures which they allege for the proof of it are, two places in the holy Gospels: the one in St. Matthew xvi. 18, 19; the other in St. John xxi. 17. In the former of these this supreme authority (they say) is promised to St. Peter; in the latter it is conferred.

I begin with the first, Matth. xvi. 18, 19. "And I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, &c. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." The sense of which words, saith

\* L. 1. de Rom. Pontif. c. 10, 11. [vol. 1. p. 300—305. Prag. 1721.]



Bellarmino, is "plain and obvious ; giving us to understand, the sovereignty over the whole Church to be here promised unto Peter, in two metaphors. The one is a metaphor of a foundation and a building. The other is a metaphor of keys. For what a foundation is in the building, that the head is in the body, the governor in the city, the king in his kingdom, and the father of the family in the house : and to whom the keys of a city are delivered, he is appointed the king or at least the governor of that city, to admit and shut out whom he pleaseth."

Unto which I have this to say, before I give the true sense of these words ; that to call this a "plain and obvious" sense of the words, which is wrapt up in a couple of metaphors, is to stumble at the very threshold ; and to contradict himself in the terms, as they ordinarily speak. For what is metaphorical, is not "plain and obvious," but needs explanation by putting it into common words ; into which if the metaphors be reduced, we shall find there is no such sense contained in them, as is pretended.

I shall explain them distinctly, and begin with the former part of this promise, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church : " which we may call the first proof they bring of St. Peter's being the monarch of the Church.

I. Which sense is so far from being "plain and obvious," that having considered both the words, and all the ancient expositors upon them, I can find nothing plainer than these two things : first, that there is no certainty St. Peter is here meant by the "rock," upon which Christ saith he will build his Church : nor, secondly, if he were, that Christ intended by calling him a "rock," to make him the Lord of his Church.

First, I say there is no evidence that St. Peter is here meant by the "rock ; " but quite contrary, we are led by the general stream of ancient interpreters to understand by the "rock" upon which the Church is built, that faith concerning Christ which Peter had newly confessed. There are more than two that thus expound these words, for one that expounds them otherwise ; as may be seen in a Sermon lately printed on this subject : \* which shews also, that the other expositions do not really differ from this ; but even they who apply these words to St. Peter, had respect (in calling him the "rock") to his preaching the doctrine of Christ, and having the honour to be

\* Sermon on St. Peter's Day, 1686.

the first preacher of it to the Gentiles. Which is all the privilege that can be thought to be peculiarly intended to him in these words. For, excepting this, whatsoever was said to him was directed to all the Apostles ; because Peter, as their mouth, spake the sense of them all when he said, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God ;" and therefore Christ's answer was returned to them all when he said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church."

As much as to say, "Thou art what thy name imports, which I have given thee with respect to this solid faith thou hast now confessed ; upon which, as upon a rock, I will build my Church by your ministry ; and particularly by thine, who shalt have the honour to lay the first stone of it in the Gentile world." Thus St. Austin\* expounds the words in many places, where he observes Peter had his name from *Petra* the Rock, viz. "that faith which he confessed," upon which Christ told him he would build his Church. For he doth not say, "Thou art Peter, and upon thee will I build my Church," but "upon this rock," which plainly relates to another thing, viz. that immoveable foundation, confessed by Peter, that he was "Christ the Son of God." Whence those known words of the same Father, "I will build thee upon me, not me upon thee."

If it were the intention of this paper to quote testimonies, I could name a great multitude, even the Ordinary Gloss, which speak to the same purpose. But it is wholly needless, since the other exposition, which makes St. Peter the rock here spoken of, is against the most unanimous consent of the Fathers of the Church, which they of the Church of Rome are bound to follow both by the doctrine of the Council of Trent,† and by the form of that Oath of Profession of Faith, which Pope Pius IV. drew up and enjoined according to the mind of that Council. And yet (so vilely are some addicted to regard nothing but their interest) there are those, who, to make these words sound as if Christ promised to build his Church upon Peter himself, have not blushed thus to translate them : "Thou art Peter, and upon this *Peter* will I build my Church." So Dr. Allen would have had the translation run in the Rhemish Testament. And so Hart alleges them in

\* Tract. cxxiv. in Joh. Serm. xiii. de Verbis Dom. &c. [Super hanc ergo (inquit) petram quam confessus es ædificabo Ecclesiam meam. Petra enim erat Christus, super quod fundamentum etiam ipse ædificatus est Petrus. vol 3. p. 822. Paris. 1680.]

† Sess. 4.

his conference with Dr. Reynolds.\* And now lately the Catholic Scripturist translates them after this manner (according to the language which Christ spoke), "Thou art a rock, and upon this rock will I build my Church." As if it were lawful for them to do anything (even contradict that very Council, whose decrees they are sworn to observe), that they may make the Scripture seem to be on their side. For the Council of Trent hath decreed the old Latin translation to be authentical, with a prohibition that "no man dare or presume under any pretence to reject it." Notwithstanding which, here are men that presume to reform it, and to make a new translation of their own heads, as different from that 'authentic' vulgar translation as from ours; for in this ours and that are the same, as everybody may know that understands the Latin tongue.

This is a presumption with a witness, to make their own translation depart so far from the language which Christ spoke, as to put instead of "*tu es Petrus*," "*tu es Petra*;" for so Christ's words should have been translated, if they signified "thou art a rock," unless they can shew us that *petrus*, in any author, is Latin for "a rock." Till this be done, we must say that such men, contrary to their faith solemnly sworn, depart, not only from antiquity, but from themselves.

And when they have done all they can, it will evidently appear, that the Church was not built by his hands alone, (though he began, as I said, and laid the first stone among the Gentiles), but by them all; and more especially by St. Paul, who was called late into this office,† but "laboured more abundantly than they all;" and, "as a wise master builder laid the foundation," upon which others built. Which foundation, he tells us, is "Jesus Christ himself," who, he likewise says, is the "only foundation," and that "no man can lay other foundation" besides him. Which shews this promise, I am treating of, had respect to all that had the office of Apostles, and wholly ruins the authority of St. Peter, upon which they would have the Church to be built. For if Jesus Christ be the only foundation that can be laid, then Peter cannot be the foundation, but only as a minister of Jesus Christ, who helped to lay the foundation, which is Christ himself and his faith. In which ministry he was no more employed than other Apostles; but St. Paul, who came last

\* Chap. 2. divis. 1.

† 1 Cor. xv. 10. et iii. 10, 11.

into this ministry, was as “wise a master-builder” as himself, and took more pains than he or any of the rest, laying the foundation where neither St. Peter nor anybody else had ever been, “lest he should build upon another man’s foundation,” as he tells the Roman Church, Rom. xv. 20.

Which words utterly overthrow their vain distinction of a “first” and a “secondary” foundation, whereby they endeavour to elude those words of St. Paul in the place before-named, 1 Cor. iii. 11. For it appears by this other place, that St. Paul was a “secondary” or “ministerial” foundation, if we may so speak—that is, speak improperly, meaning thereby one that laid the foundation; which he did as much as St. Peter, or any other Apostle—nay, a great deal more, as he himself tells us, when he saith he laboured more abundantly than they all.

In exact speaking, there is no foundation on which the Church is built but Christ alone (as St. Paul assures us); “in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord,” Ephes. ii. 21. But faith in Christ being that whereby we are joined to him, it may be called by the same name; and accordingly the Colossians are said to be “grounded\* in the faith” as upon a *foundation* (the Greek word signifies), from which he would have them not to be moved. And the Apostles, as he there saith, being the preachers of this faith, and the instruments whereby men were brought to believe on Christ, and so joined to him as “living stones,” are called by the name of “foundation” in the place before-named, Ephes. ii. 20. “Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,” &c. But then it is evident, that Peter alone is not this foundation, but all the Apostles. For there are twelve foundations of this sort, as we read in Rev. xxi. 14, by whose ministry the Church was built upon Christ, the sole foundation (in proper speaking) that was laid for all to build upon.

Finally, the Apostles understood no such pre-eminence as is now pretended, to be promised to St. Peter in these words; nor did he himself so understand them, when the Holy Ghost was come upon them to lead them into all truth. For then St. Paul could not have said, that he came “not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles,” and that he was “behind them in nothing,” 2 Cor. xi. 5, and xii. 11: nor could he have under-

\* τῇ πίστει τεθεμελιωμένοι. Col. i. 23.



taken to correct St. Peter, Gal. ii. 11, 12, &c. : nor would St. Peter have borne his censure, if he had known he was the head of the Church ; but have bidden St. Paul know his distance, and remember that he ought not to control him, but be controlled by him as his better.

Secondly, After all this that hath been said, to shew that there is nothing here promised to Peter but what belongs to all the Apostles, except only that of his being employed in laying the first foundation of faith among the Gentiles, it remains that I shew there is nothing in the word "rock," which implies any superiority of power and authority over the rest of his brethren and the whole Church, if we should suppose this promise to have been made to him alone ; for it denotes nothing of government, but hath respect to the support and stability of that structure, which is firmly laid upon it. And therefore the ancient Doctors (as may be seen in the Sermon before-mentioned) gave other reasons of his being called a "rock," and not this, "Because to him was committed the government of the whole Church, especially about faith." Which is the explanation Bellarmine gives of this word, affirming it to be the signification of this metaphor, "For it is proper to a fundamental rock to govern and sustain the whole edifice." This is perfectly new language, never heard of in the world before, that "it is proper to a Foundation to govern ;" for it is altogether *improper*, and nobody thinks of any such thing, when he reads of a Foundation. But if it be *proper*, then all the Apostles were Governors of the whole Church as well as he, because they were all Foundations, as was before observed, having the very same power given to them by Christ, which (we now suppose) was here promised to him alone.

Unto which they of the Church of Rome have nothing to reply ; but only this (which is merely a bold affirmation, and as absurd as all the rest), "They were indeed all of them the heads, governors, and pastors of the Church universal ; but not after the same manner as Peter was."\* Why so ? "For they had the highest and most ample power, as apostles, and ambassadors ; but Peter also as an ordinary pastor." As much as to say, "They had indeed the highest power in the Church, and as large as he ; but not so high a power as his."

\* Bellarm. l. 1. de Pontif. Rom. cap. xi. [vol. 1. p. 305. col. 1. Prag. 1721.]

Let any man try if he can make any other sense of those words—that is, find any sense at all in them. For was this power of being an ordinary pastor greater than that of the Apostles, or no? If it were greater, then it is not true which he affirms, that “the Apostles had the highest power.”\* If it were less than the power of the Apostles, then they were all greater than he, as he was an ordinary pastor. And then it is nonsense to say, “they so had a plenitude of power, as that St. Peter was notwithstanding the head of them, and they all depended on him.” For he rather depended on them, as an ordinary pastor, if that was less than the power of the Apostleship; and if it were not, but greater than it, then (as I said) it is false, that the Apostles had the highest power.

This is sufficient to shew into what absurdities men run, when they go about to maintain a falsehood; and what wretched shifts they devise to obscure the clear truth, which shines in their eyes. Which when they have done, they walk on in darkness, and cannot be persuaded to see or acknowledge their error. Nay, one error grows out of another; and having begun to wrest the holy Scripture, they go on to strain it, so far as to extend it to any purpose they have to serve by it.

For having presumed that Peter, and he alone, is promised to be made Governor of the whole Church by these words of our Saviour, they immediately presume, without the show of a proof, that the Bishops of Rome succeed him in this authority. Which is a very large step, or rather leap, from Peter to the Popes of Rome; between whom there is such a vast distance, that it is impossible to make out the claim, to which they pretend, from him. For there is no evidence that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, but only that he founded that Church, and settled a bishop there. For if he was Bishop of Antioch, it was against all ancient rules to leave that, and go to another see. The truth is, he was properly bishop of neither; but planted a Church in each, and first at Antioch, before he came to Rome. And who can think he did not settle one to take care of that Church of Antioch, when he left it? who may be called his successor, as well as he whom he is supposed to have placed afterwards in Rome. Which two things being allowed as unquestionable matters of fact, there is no reason can be given, why all the power and jurisdiction which is claimed upon the

\* *Habuerunt summam potestatem.*

account of succession should not devolve, by the right of primogeniture, upon the Bishop of Antioch; since it is confessed he first sat there, and sat there seven years, which is more than can be proved he did at Rome, where he was not when St. Paul came thither, Acts xxviii., nor when he first answered before Nero, nor when he was ready to be offered, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 11, 16: nor can any certain time be assigned when he was there, as we are sure St. Paul was, who is acknowledged to be a founder of that Church, and had as much (or rather more) right to leave a bishop to succeed him there, as St. Peter; who could transfer to nobody, neither there nor anywhere else, what was personally vested in him, as all the privilege here granted him was. Or, if he was to have any successor in his supposed dominion, there were others had a better title to it than the Bishop of Rome; particularly St. John, who it is certain survived St. Peter. Therefore, all that Bellarmine dare say in this matter is, that "the Apostles being dead, the Apostolical authority remained in St. Peter's successor alone."\* For which he gives us not one word of proof, but only this notorious falsehood, that the Roman bishop alone is called by all the "Apostolical Bishop," and his see simply the "Apostolical See." When all the world knows, Jerusalem, Constantinople, and divers other places, are called by the same name of "Apostolical Sees, or Churches;" and their bishops called not only "Apostolical," but "Catholic," and said to be "Bishops of the Catholic Church." The meaning of all which is nothing else, but that they held the Catholic religion and faith, as Launoy† most ingenuously confesses, and maintains the Roman bishops themselves intended no more, when they subscribed themselves "Bishops of the Catholic Church."

Nay, Bellarmine himself in the place now named is constrained to acknowledge, that "the supreme ecclesiastical power was given not only to Peter, but to other Apostles also." For they might all say that of St. Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 28, "My daily business, the care of all the churches." "But it was given to Peter as an ordinary pastor, who should have perpetual successors: to others as delegates, who should have no successors." Which is a mere invention, a pure figment of his own brain; without the shadow of a ground for it in the Book of God, or any ancient authority; and against his own confession, that all the

\* L. 1. De Pont. Rom. c. xi.

† Epist. pars i. ad Franciscum Bonum.

Apostles had the highest power (which includes all power both ordinary and extraordinary), and a power to appoint their successors in the places they converted.

There have abundance of other things been said by our writers to shew, that, whatsoever may be supposed to have been promised in these words, the Bishops of Rome can thence derive no lawful claim to the like authority. And yet (as if there were nothing plainer, than that Christ spake to the Roman bishops, when he said these words to St. Peter) they have the confidence from hence to entitle the Pope to the privilege of infallibility, as well as to a supreme dominion over the Church. So Bellarmine,\* who elsewhere alleges these words, to prove that "the chief bishop" (*i. e.* theirs), "when he teacheth the whole Church, in things belonging to faith can in no case err." But this depends upon his former suppositions, that Peter is the Rock of the Church as its supreme Governor, and therefore every one of his successors in like manner is the same: which having no foundation, all his superstructure upon them falls to the ground. And indeed it is so sandy, that honest men among themselves are ashamed to build anything of this nature upon it: particularly Launoy, who on set purpose demonstrates that Bellarmine neither obeyed the decree of the Trent Council,† nor kept the profession of faith enjoined by Pius IV., when he drew his conclusion of the Pope's infallibility from these words, "Thou art Peter," &c., but was guilty of downright flattery of the Court of Rome; for whose sake he in like manner falsified in the citations he brings out of the Fathers, to maintain the same untruth.

But further than this, the same writer presses these words to prove that "General Councils cannot err, neither in believing, nor teaching:"‡ which is as much as to confess, that what Christ said to Peter was intended to all bishops, of whom a General Council consists. But here he endeavours to bring off himself by this salvo, "if the Council be confirmed by the Pope;" as if they received their infallibility from him who turns their doubtful opinions into oracles. Whence it is, that from the very same words ["Thou art Peter," &c.] he proves the Pope to be above a Council,§ "immediately constituted by

\* L. iv. De Rom. Pontif. c. 3. [vol. 1. p. 449. col. 1. Prag. 1721. Summus Pontifex cum totam Ecclesiam docet in his quæ ad fidem pertinent nullo casu errare potest.]

† Epist. pars v. Gulielmo Voello.

‡ L. 2. de Conc. Autor. cap. 1.

§ Ib. cap. 15.



Christ the pastor and head, not only of all particular churches, but also of the whole universal Church congregated together.”

If this be to interpret the Scripture, I know not what is setting it upon the rack, and stretching it as far as it pleaseth him who takes it in hand. No heretics ever took so great a liberty as this which, according to their way of reasoning, makes it necessary to seal up the Bible quite, that nobody may look into it. For if the danger of wresting the Holy Scriptures be a just cause for denying the liberty of reading them to illiterate people, it ought not to be granted to the most learned, who, it appears by this great Cardinal, are in as much or more danger of this than any other men. And so farewell the study of the Scriptures, which neither priest nor people must meddle withal!

But, thanks be to God, there is such a thing as honesty and integrity still remaining in the world; which qualifies all men for the wholesome perusal of them, and hath preserved the minds of some in that communion so uncorrupted, as to make them disdain and reject these perverse and arrogant interpretations, or distortions rather, of Holy Scripture. There is one hath lately declared his sense of this promise to St. Peter, in remarkable words, with which I conclude this part of my discourse:\* “Supposing Christ to have spoken these words, [“and upon this rock”] of the person of Peter, he meant nothing else thereby, but that Peter should labour very much in the edification of the Church, that is, in the conversion of the faithful and administration of the churches. And, therefore, the most that can be deduced from hence is, that he should be the first and the chief among those who were to preach the Gospel: but it cannot from hence be gathered, with Bellarmine, that the government of the whole Church was committed to Peter, especially about faith.”

II. The truth of this will further appear in the explication of the next words, which expound those of which I have now treated: “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.”

The sense of which is not so “plain and obvious” as Bellarmine pretends; but we agree that they are a plain allusion to

\* Du Pin. de antiquæ Eccles. Discipl. Dissert. iv. cap. 1. sect. 1. [p. 307. Paris, 1686.]

the words of the prophet Isaiah concerning Eliakim, Isa. xxii. 23: "I will give thee the keys of the house of David," *i. e.* make thee—not high priest, as he grossly mistakes, but—steward of the royal family, to take in and thrust out whom thou shalt think fit. Such was the power here promised to Peter by our Lord, who saith of himself, "that he hath the key of David," Rev. iii. 7, *i. e.* of the house or family of David, which he alone governs by an absolute power; but tells Peter he intended to make him under himself, his supreme Lord and Master, such a steward in the Church, as Eliakim had been in the Court.

I say, in the Church; for by the "kingdom of heaven," I think nobody will now dispute is meant the family of Christ, or the Christian Church, in a great many places of the Gospel; and most likely is so to be interpreted here. But if any body be so minded, as to understand by the "kingdom of heaven," not the Christian society here below, but the company of the blessed above, let them consider that the sense will still be the same; because by admission into the one, and abiding in it, we come to the other. And baptism is the key which lets us into the Church, out of which such as notoriously break their baptismal vow, ought to be shut by the censures of the Church, and again received into it upon their hearty repentance by granting them absolution. Thus the following words expound it, "and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth," &c.

That "binding and loosing" are one and the same with the "power of the keys," is acknowledged by the Roman Catechism,\* and by Bellarmine himself, who confesses the plain sense of these words to be, that "first of all an authority or power is promised, defined by keys; and then the actions or office of this power is explained by those words, loosing and binding. So that to loose and to open, to shut and to bind, is altogether the same thing."† And we need not further trouble ourselves to inquire how far this power extends: for it is certain there is nothing here promised, though we suppose it never so large, which was intended to him alone, but to them all; except that of opening the door first to let the Gentiles into the Church.

This is apparent from what was said before concerning Christ speaking to them all in him, as he spake for them all in answer

\* De Sacrament. Poeniten. n. 44.

† L. l. de Pont. Rom. cap. 12. verum. [Pragæ, 1721. vol. 1. p. 308. n. 36.]

to our Saviour's question propounded to the whole company. Which produced this promise from our Saviour, not to him alone, but to all them in whose name he spake. Which is no new interpretation, but as old as the Church itself; for "the ancients say with an unanimous consent, that these keys were given to the whole Church in the person of Peter,"\* as a late writer in the Roman communion honestly confesses. St. Austin particularly "inculcates this an hundred times" (as his words are); a proof of which may be seen in another of his brethren,† who hath made a collection of twenty-six places out of his works, to shew that he taught this openly, frequently, and constantly, in such plain words as may be understood by themselves, without the help of an interpreter. I cannot well forbear to mention one of them, because it affords us many considerable remarks:‡ "As some things," says he, "are spoken which may seem properly to belong to the Apostle Peter, and yet have not a clear sense but when they are referred to the Church (whereof he is acknowledged to have represented the person in a figure, because of the primacy he had among the Apostles); as that is, I WILL GIVE THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; and if there be any like: so Judas sustains, after a certain manner, the person of the Jews, the enemies of Christ," &c.

Here they of the Church of Rome are very forward to catch at these words, which signify a place of priority that Peter had among the Apostles (which nobody denies); but are not willing to take any notice of all the rest, which utterly overthrow that primacy which they would advance him unto from this place. For first, he says, some things do but "seem" to belong to Peter, which in truth ought to be referred to the Church. And secondly, that their sense is "not clear" or evident, till they be carried beyond him. Among which things, thirdly, he reckons what our Saviour here saith, "I will give thee the keys," &c.; which they would now engross to St. Peter, and have us believe this to be the plain and obvious sense of Christ's words, which St. Austin says are not plain, unless we refer them to the Church. Whose person, fourthly, he says he did bear or represent, not by virtue of his place, or any authority he had above the rest, but "in a figure," to

\* Du Pin de antiquæ Eccles. Disc. Dissert. iv. c. 1. sect. 1. [ut supra, p. 308.]

† Jo. Launoy, Epist. pars 2. Hadriano Vallantio, p. 14, &c.

‡ Aug. Enarratio in Psal. cviii.

signify unity (that is), as the ancients interpret it. And it is farther remarkable, fifthly, that Christ did not promise him the primacy in promising him the keys, for "he had" the primacy (here spoken of) before; and with respect to that, Christ directed to him these words rather than [to] any of the rest, because he was already the first, not in office, but in order, and so the fittest person to be singled out to represent what Christ intended. And to convince every one there is no authoritative primacy meant in these words of St. Austin, he adds, sixthly, that Judas sustained the person of Christ's enemies, as Peter did of the Church. Will anybody infer from hence, that Judas had a jurisdiction over all the wicked, and left it to his successors, one of which hath now the same? Let them forbear to make such inferences, from what is said of St. Peter's primacy, which gave him no right to rule, but only made him stand fairest, being the first, to be chosen to represent the rest. If any will be still so perverse as to wrangle, because St. Austin doth not mention Judas's primacy as he doth Peter's; let them learn more modesty by knowing that Prosper, one of St. Austin's scholars, upon the very same Psalm, says in express terms, that Judas\* carried the primacy of Christ's enemies. Which if they will not expound to signify a supreme authority to govern Christ's enemies, let them no longer interpret St. Peter's primacy to signify such an authority over his friends. He had none here promised him, is as certain as anything can be; but the keys to commend unity were promised him; which were in truth given to *all* the rest. This is the ancient sense, which drew this plain and pertinent observation from another honest writer, in the Roman communion,† "He said to Peter, I will give thee the keys, but he did not say, I will give them to thee alone."

Which is justified to be true by three other passages in the holy Gospels. In the first of which he promises as much to all, in the very same words, as he had done to him, Matth. xviii. 18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven;" which is the explanation, as you heard before, of the power of the keys, in the same terms (without the least difference but what is between

\* Judas primatum gessit inimicorum Christi. [Melius ergo universa clarebunt, si quædam ad omne genus inimicorum Christi quorum Judas primatum gerit, &c. In Psalmum 108. p. 407. Paris. 1711.]

† Rigaltius in Epist. Firmiliani.



the plural number and the singular), wherein it was delivered to St. Peter. And in the next chapter he repeats it again, only in other words, when he saith, Matth. xix. 28 : "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging (i. e. ruling and governing) the twelve tribes of Israel;" without any mention of one throne, peculiar and higher than the rest, to St. Peter. And thus far there is no more than a promise to be met withal in the Gospel; but no actual grant, no words whereby our Lord makes a conveyance of this power to them, till after his resurrection from the dead. When he gives out a commission to them, as large as can be made; wherein there is nothing peculiar reserved to St. Peter, but it runs in general terms to them all, John xx. 21, 22, 23. For he neither saith, I send *thee*," nor "breathed upon *him alone*," saying, "Receive *thou* the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins *thou* remittest," &c. : but he saith to them, being all (save Thomas) assembled together, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I *you*. And when he had said thus, he breathed on *them*, and said unto *them*, Receive *ye* the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins *ye* remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins *ye* retain, they are retained." And accordingly it may be added, when the Holy Ghost descended (of which this breathing on them was an emblem and pledge), "they were all (Thomas with the rest) with one accord in one place," and it was imparted to each of them alike, without any mark of distinction. For we read of no flame that crowned the head of St. Peter, greater and more illustrious than that upon his brethren: but the text saith, "the tongues, like as of fire, were divided, and sat upon every one of them singly,\* and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost;" Acts ii. 2, 3. The mighty wind, also, wherein this flame came (betokening the powerful inspiration which was entering into them), "filled all the house where they were sitting," and not only that corner where St. Peter was placed. And so this promise was equally performed in common to them all, as it had been made to them all. Nay, this very thing is no less than a demonstration, that the promise was intended to all, because the performance was to all.

That here his promise was performed, is very manifest to those who are desirous to understand the truth; for no other time can be named when it was performed to Peter; nor any

\* 'Εφ' ἕνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν.

other words found wherein the thing promised was conveyed, but these, "as my Father sent me, so I send you." And lastly, this is the sense of the Church, as appears by St. Cyprian in ancient times; who observes that our Lord, who said to Peter, "Thou art Peter," &c. gave to all his Apostles "equal power"\* after his resurrection, when he said, "As the living Father sent me, so I send you," &c.; concluding from thence, that all the Apostles were what St. Peter was:† And by Theophylact, in later times, who thus glosses upon Matth. xvi. 19: "Though our Lord said only to Peter, I WILL GIVE THEE, yet they were given to all the Apostles. When? At that time when he said, Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted. For the words I WILL GIVE denote the future time, that is, after the resurrection."

Then he said to them all, "As my Father hath sent me, so I send you." Which are words so large, that they contain in them a plenitude of power, and confute the conceit of those who say that Christ indeed gave the power of remitting and retaining sins to all the Apostles, but the power of the keys to Peter alone. Whereby if they meant, that to Peter it was given to open the gate first to the Gentiles, it ought to be allowed to be a true sense; though we are not certain it was the thing peculiarly intended by our Saviour in these words. But understanding thereby a distinct power from that of binding and loosing, retaining and remitting (which St. Peter exercised when he let the Gentiles into the Church), it is certainly false that he gave him such a power, which he did not confer upon the rest. For should we suppose binding and loosing to be distinct from the power of the keys, yet this power of the keys, be it what it will, we may be sure is included in these comprehensive words, "As my Father hath sent me, so I send you;" which were spoken unto them all.

And therefore as the keys were not promised to him alone; so not to him *more* than any other Apostle; but only the use of them *first, before* any other Apostle. That's the most, as I have often said, which can reasonably be conceived to be peculiarly promised to Peter in these words, that he should first open the door of faith to the Gentiles, as we read he did, Acts x.; and as some think to the Jews also, Acts ii. Ter-

\* Parem Potestatem.

† Hoc utique erant et cæteri Apostoli quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio præditi et honoris et potestatis, &c. L. de Unitate Ecclesiæ et Epist. xxiii. ad Jubaianum.

tullian\* seems to be of this mind (and I shall not here dispute it), who mentioning this place, "I will give thee the keys," &c., thus proceeds: "so the event teaches us; the Church was first built on him, that is, by him. He first handled the key. See what key; Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, &c. Acts ii. 22, &c. He in fine did first by the baptism of Christ unlock the entrance of the heavenly kingdom, &c.; he bound Ananias with the bond of death; and he absolved the man lame of his feet from the weakness wherewith he laboured; and in the dispute which arose about the obligation of the law, Peter first of all by the instinct of the Holy Ghost (having told them how God made choice of him, that the Gentiles should hear the word from his mouth) said, And now why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear, &c.;" where he plainly makes the "power of the keys" and "binding and loosing" to be the same thing: and from the scope of his discourse it appears, as Launoy† hath observed, that they then believed at Rome, that in the person of Peter the keys were given to the Church, that is (says he) "the power of binding and loosing." Which things if the late Catholic Scripturist had known, or would have been pleased to mind, how could he have had the confidence to say, that "our Lord spake these words to Peter to signify, that he was the head and chief in ordinary. For though the power of binding and loosing was afterwards given to the other Apostles, yet the keys of the kingdom of heaven are never in Scripture said to be given to any but to St. Peter."‡ "By which keys also," he saith, "is signified, the plenitude of highest power." For this vain conceit is contrary to the common opinion of the ancient Fathers (whom they are bound by their profession of faith and oath to follow); contrary to their greatest schoolmen, such as Scotus, Aquinas, Alex. Alensis, who affirm that the keys promised to Peter in St. Matth. xvi. were given to all the Apostles in St. John xx.; contrary also to their own Catechism (as I have shewn), according to which he ought to have instructed his followers.

The sum of what has been said is this:

1. The power which our Lord here promised to Peter, was not meant to him alone.

\* L. de Pudicitia, c. xxi. † Epist. pars ii. Hadriano Vallantio, p. 6.

‡ The Seventh Point, n. 6.

2. For he did but represent and sustain the person of the Church (as the ancients speak), to whom this promise belongs.

3. And therefore our Lord afterward promises the very same thing, in the same words, to all the Apostles, which he here promises to Peter.

4. And accordingly when he performed his promise, he gave this power to every one of them equally.

5. But Christ directed this promise at the first singularly to him, that he might commend unity.

6. Or, at the most, he promised him the honour of opening the door of faith first unto the Gentiles.

7. From whence we can only gather, that he was the first among the Apostles; but not that he was promised any power which the rest had not; for the contrary is apparent.

8. To all which I must add (repeating briefly what I said upon the foregoing words), that if we should grant our Saviour to have promised some power to Peter (when he said, "I will give thee the keys") which the other Apostles had not, it would prove [only] a personal prerogative, and cannot be shewn to have descended to any successor, much less to the Pope of Rome; who, Bellarmine saith, "is a true prince, who hath power to make true laws to bind the whole Church." And this he proves from these words, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven," &c.\*

Concerning which it will be thought too sharp perhaps to say (though they are the words of one in the Roman communion),† "simply to relate the words of this author, is simply to confute them; they are so very contrary to truth and equity." The reader therefore may be pleased briefly to consider, what our Lord himself saith to all his Apostles, Matth. xxiii. 8, 9, 10, which utterly overturns these proud pretensions. "But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ." The repetition of one and the same thing so often, in words of the same import, argues it to be a matter of great moment, which ought to be duly weighed. And it is this, that no man, no not any of his Apostles, should take upon him to prescribe that as a part of religion, which God our Saviour hath not prescribed by his

\* L. iv. De Rom. Pontif. c. 16. [Pragæ, 1721. vol. 1. p. 480. n. 4.]

† Launoy ubi supra, p. 77.



laws : and that we ought not absolutely to submit to any man's dictates, as children do to the will of their fathers ; nor pin our faith, as we speak, upon any man's sleeve, *i. e.* let it depend entirely upon his authority : for this is a submission which is due only to God our Saviour, who (in this sense of the words) is our only Father, and Master, and Leader ; and therefore we cannot without the highest injury to him own any one else to be such, nor give them these names, but as they teach, not their own, but Christ's doctrine unto men. And in this office all the Apostles were equal, and no one of them could claim an authority over the rest of his brethren.

There are many other places wherein we read of "one Shepherd," "one Lord," "one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy:" from whence we may conclude, that Peter himself had no power to make, but only to declare, the laws of his and our Lord and Lawgiver, Jesus Christ. So the words of Christ's commission run, when he saith, not to him alone but to them all, "Go ye and disciple all nations, &c. teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matth. xxviii. 20. Here is their authority, to publish the commands of their Master, not what they pleased to command themselves. Which Peter was so far from doing, that he went not about the abrogation of the ceremonial law and the calling of the Gentiles, till he was authorised by an heavenly vision ; which discovered this mystery to him as a part of the counsel of God, but no law, nor so much as a thought, of his own. For being charged afterwards by the Jews for eating with men uncircumcised, he excuses himself by a long apology, wherein he relates how he was commanded to do it by God himself, whom he could not withstand, Acts xi. 3, 4, &c., which was not done like a Lawgiver. Nay, after this revelation made to him, he was so weak as to observe this Law, to the great offence of the Gentiles ; for which he was reprehended by St. Paul, who had the honour to abrogate the law of Moses among the Gentiles, while St. Peter, who began that work, was the minister of the circumcision, Gal. ii. 7, 10, 11, &c.

Nor doth the word [bind] import a power to impose laws, but only to tie men to those laws which are already made. Thus it signifies in that very place, which Bellarmine alleges to maintain his sense of the word, *viz.* to make laws ; Matth. xxiii. 4 : "For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders," &c.—that is, they were rigorous interpreters of the laws of God, which it was

their office to expound according to the plain sense and meaning of them, and not according to the tradition of the elders, which had made them intolerable burdens.

But suppose the word to signify what they please, it will do them no service; because this power of binding was not promised to Peter alone, but to them all, as hath been before proved. And consequently he could do nothing, which they could not do as much as he; that is, they were all “ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God:” \* all of them like to Eliakim, to whom the “key of the house of David” is promised, as the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” to Peter. For by that very word which we translate “stewards,” or “dispensers,” is that office† to which Eliakim was advanced in the room of Shebna expressed by the LXX. in Isa. xxii. 19, 21: which was not a supreme power in the court, where all the rest of the courtiers did not depend on him as their lord and prince; but the power of a prime minister in the royal family, which he governed not after his own will, but the king’s. In like manner all the Apostles were “ministers, by whom men believed,” 1 Cor. iii. 5: “stewards of the heavenly mysteries,” 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2, which they faithfully dispensed according to the will of Christ; who “hath the key of David;” that is, is the sole supreme Governor of the Church, and gives rules to it; which the Apostles delivered but did not ordain themselves, nor bind upon men by their own authority, but by his. For they were not authors of the Divine laws which they taught, but the publishers of them, and equal publishers of one and the same common doctrine: which every bishop in the Church hath as much authority to bind upon men as the Pope: they being “all of the same merit and priesthood” (as St. Hierom speaks), ‡ “all successors of the Apostles.”

There are some other words of St. Hierom (it may not be here unfit to note), which are usually alleged to prove the contrary, viz. that he thought St. Peter had some supremacy of power over the rest of the Apostolical College; from whence they hope to derive the like power unto the Pope over all bishops: they are in his first book against Jovinian, where he saith, “One among the Twelve was therefore chosen, that, an HEAD being constituted, the occasion of schism might be removed.” But they are unconscionably disingenuous who allege this passage, and do not give us the entire sentence, but

\* 1 Cor. iv. 1.

† *oikonomiay*.

‡ Epist. ad Evagrium.

only this conclusion of it ; which can have no such meaning as they pretend, without making mere nonsense of the words foregoing, which are these : “ But thou sayest, the Church was founded upon Peter ; though the very same in another place is done upon all the Apostles, and they received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the strength of the Church is solidly bottomed upon them *equally*.” And then follow the words now named, “ Yet *one* was therefore chosen among the Twelve,” &c. Which makes it as clear as the sun, that he dreamed of no such headship of one over all the rest, as signifies a supremacy of power ; for what one text, he saith, affirms of Peter, another affirms of them all ; they all receiving the keys (which is the highest power), and the stability of the Church relying upon them equally.

I conclude this part of my discourse with the observation of a late learned writer of our Church.\*

“ If any power or degree of power was here promised to Peter more than to the rest of the Apostles, it must be gathered either from the force of the substance of the promise, or from the circumstances wherewith it was delivered.

“ The substantial part is nothing else but that of a steward in the Church, set forth by the emblem of keys, and more explicitly declared by the power of binding and loosing ; which carries in it no intimation of such a thing as a supremacy over the whole Church, but only of a ruling power in some family ; that is, in that part of the Universal Church where his lot should fall. For this very thing being presently after promised to all the Apostles, it makes it evident there was no supremacy here promised ; for then there must be not one, but twelve supremes.

“ As for the circumstances, wherein this part and the former of our Saviour’s promise was delivered (which some are pleased to urge as very considerable), they are of no strength to support so great a weight as they lay upon them. For first, it is very unreasonable that circumstances should be thought of greater force to declare the meaning of this promise, than the very substance itself is. And secondly, all these circumstances (save only that of his own name and his father’s joined together) are not peculiar to him, but common to others who confessed Christ’s divinity, and had it revealed from God, and were blessed, and designed for stones in the fabric of the

\* Dr. Hammond’s *Dispatcher* dispatch’d, p. 3. c. 7. sect. 2. n. 13.

Church, as well as Peter. And further, even that circumstance of calling him Simon Barjona, had a visible reason for it, to distinguish this Simon from Simon Zelotes. So that there is nothing left but the small circumstance of calling him by his name, to be the grand foundation of St. Peter's supremacy.

"Can any one be satisfied with such poor proofs? Which are no better than if we should argue in this manner: Our Lord said to Peter, Follow me, and so he did to the other eleven,<sup>b</sup> and by this made them his disciples in common. But had he said, Simon Barjona, follow thou me (as he might very well, if any other Simon were then present), he alone, according to this way of discoursing, had been taken into discipleship, and none after him enjoyed this honour."

But I have said enough, if not too much, upon these texts, and must here end this paper, for fear of swelling it beyond the intended bulk. The rest shall soon follow.



THE TEXTS EXAMINED WHICH PAPISTS CITE OUT OF  
THE BIBLE, TO PROVE THE SUPREMACY OF ST. PETER  
AND OF THE POPE OVER THE WHOLE CHURCH.

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THE SECOND PART.

Now we are come to the last reserve of the Roman Church for the support of this cause, which lies in those words of Christ to Peter, John xxi. 15, 16, 17 : "Feed my lambs, and feed my sheep." They are sensible of the truth of that which hath been oft repeated, that in neither of the former places Christ gave anything to Peter, but only promised he would give him such things as are therein mentioned. Now they are hard put to it to find when he did perform this promise, and not find withal that he performed it to all the Apostles, and therefore (as I have said) made it to them all. Here is the only place they rely upon ; here they would fain find, what is no where else to be found, something peculiarly granted to Peter, which was conferred upon none of the rest. Read the words, say they, and observe how they are peculiarly spoken to Peter : "So when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these ? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me ? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me ? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me ? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

See, say they, with what solemnity our Lord here speaks to Peter, and to him alone, calling him three times particularly by his name and relation, and bidding him as oft, "Feed his lambs or sheep ;" whereby he instated him in the office he had promised him, and made him in a particular manner to be a pastor, even the pastor of the whole Church, with a supreme power over it.

First, To which we reply, that having seen and considered all this, we can see nothing here that looks like a grant or commission ; nothing given to St. Peter by these words ; which are a plain charge or command requiring him to do his office ; which was therefore conferred upon him before, together with the rest of the Apostles, when our Lord said, “ As my Father hath sent me, so I send you, &c. Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” &c.

Secondly, And as here is no commission, no conveyance of anything made to him, but a bare precept to do his duty, so the duty doth not concern him alone, but belongs to them all as much as him. It is at this time required in a precept directed to him alone, that’s true ; and Bellarmine might have spared all his labour to prove that these words were spoken to Peter alone. They were so, if we understand thereby that he only by name is now admonished of his duty (the reason of which we shall see presently) ; but the duty, of which he was admonished, was not peculiar to him ; and so the words do not belong to him alone, as appears by many arguments.

1. From St. Peter himself, who seems to have interpreted the mind of Christ in this speech to him, in his words to the elders of the Church to whom he wrote, 1 Pet. v. 1 : “ The elders, which are among you, I exhort, who am”—What ? The Monarch of the Church ? the Vicar of Christ ? or, Pastor of pastors ? the chief Apostle ? or supreme Bishop ? No such thing, but—“ Συμπρεσβύτερος, your fellow-elder, &c. Feed the flock of God which is among you,” &c. And from whom did these elders receive their power and authority ? From St. Peter ? No such matter ; but from the chief Shepherd or Pastor, from whom he bids them expect their reward, ver. 4.

2. In like manner, St. Paul gives the very same charge to the elders of Ephesus, to “ take heed to themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” Acts xx. 28.

3. For Christ (as I said) hath given this power unto all his Apostles, when he said, “ As my Father hath sent me, so I send you,” &c. John xx. 21. What did he send them to do ? but “ to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad,” and to “ feed his flock,” as he the “ good Shepherd” had done, John x. 11. and xi. 52. And therefore we may say here of these words, as Rigaltius doth of the former—“ He said to Peter, Feed my sheep ; but he doth not say, Do thou alone feed them.” No. It may be further

observed, that our Lord in his lifetime sent them all “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” Matth. x. 6, 7. And a little before this, seeing the people scattered abroad, “as sheep having no shepherd,” he bade his disciples pray that the “Lord would send labourers among them.” Not one (who should depute others), but as many as were needful to gather in his harvest, Matth. ix. 36, &c.

4. And therefore thus the ancient Fathers have expounded these words, particularly the Roman clergy themselves, in their letter to the clergy of Carthage, where admonishing them of their duty (in the absence of St. Cyprian, by reason of the then persecution), they press them with these words to Peter, “Feed my sheep,” which, they tell them, “the rest of the disciples in like manner did,” and accordingly it was now incumbent upon them also, “in the room of the pastor, to keep the flock.”\*

This Launoy† proves is the exposition of the Church, and most justly condemns Bellarmine (and such like flatterers) as failing in his duty; which required him to expound these words according to the sense of the whole Church, which is directly against this exposition, that Christ here gave this power to Peter alone. A great many of the ancient Popes of Rome, he there shews, speak otherwise; and one of their neighbours, St. Ambrose, expressly declares, that “those sheep and that flock which Christ bade Peter feed, he did not alone receive, but he both received them with us, and with him we all received them.”‡ As much as to say, What Christ said to Peter he spake in him to all bishops. Which is the sense of St. Austin in a great many places, as the same author shews,§ making Peter here also to have represented the whole Church, so that “when it was said to him, it was said to all, Lovest thou me? Feed my sheep.”||

5. But what need any further testimonies? when this Preface is sung not only in the Feast of St. Peter, but of all the rest of the Apostles and Evangelists except St. John, and on their Octaves, in the Roman Church at this very day—“We humbly beseech thee, O Lord, the Eternal Pastor, not to forsake thy flock, but preserve it with continued protection,

\* Vice Pastoris custodire gregem.

† Epist. Par. ii. ad Raimundum Formentinum, p. 27, &c.

‡ L. de Sacerd. dignit. c. 2.

§ Launoy Epist. pars v. Carolo Magistro.

|| De Agone Christiano, cap. 30.

by thy blessed Apostles; that it may be governed by the same rulers, which as Vicars of thy work thou didst bestow upon it, to be set Pastors over it." This is sufficient to shew, that the Roman Church itself hath anciently believed this charge was given to all the Apostles, to feed his flock and be the chief pastors of it.\*

What? will some say, Was there nothing here peculiarly spoken to Peter? No mystery in those words thrice repeated, and specially directed to him by name, as you cannot but acknowledge? Yes, no doubt; but it is no more than this, that Peter, of all the rest, had lately thrice denied his Master. This might well have made Peter himself question his love to Christ, and move our Lord to ask him whether he still remained as confident as he was before that he had a greater affection to him than any of his disciples. For so he begins this speech, "Lovest thou me more than these?" As he had fancied he did when he said, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended," Matth. xxvi. 33. The vanity of which thoughts he had found by sad experience, he alone denying, nay, abjuring his Master. In this Peter was singular, and did more than any of the rest. For which cause more was to be said to him, and more was to be done by him, than any of them. He was to answer thrice to three questions, which were solemnly put to him, that by a threefold confession he might obliterate his threefold denial.

This is all the mystery which the ancient Christians could find in this solemn speech, made with particular application to Peter; as may be seen in St. Cyril of Alexandria,† St. Austin,‡ Greg. Nazianzen,§ and a long train, which I could set down, of other Fathers, which assures us that this was the common and literal exposition of these words, and that they understood no other reason why our Lord addressed himself only to Peter, though other Apostles were present, but only this—That he might declare he would have Peter, notwithstanding his denying him thrice, be confident, upon this profession of love to him, he was restored to his favour, and that he would have him no less than the rest look upon the care of his flock as belonging to him, who had deserved by his shamefully repeated denial of him, his fall from that office, more than any other of

\* Præesse Pastores.

† Orat. xxix. in Johan.

† In Johan. xxi.

§ Tract. 29.



his Apostles; for though they all fled, yet none denied him but Peter alone. And therefore these words were as if our Lord had said, Though there be cause enough for me to reject thee, yet because thou didst repent thee of thy sin, and dost now profess thy love to me, feed my sheep no less than the rest of my Apostles to whom I have committed the care of them; which will sufficiently expose the vanity of the Catholic Scripturist,\* who bids us (against the sense of all antiquity), “to note that our Lord would not have required greater love in Peter rather than in any of the rest, nor have said, Lovest thou me more than these? if he had not here intended to give him higher dignity in pastorship than the rest.” Note rather, good reader, what hath been said, and these words of St. Cyril, who was a better Scripturist and more Catholic than this Jesuit. I will not set them down at large, but only the conclusion of them, which are very remarkable, and expressly expound this passage as I have done: “In that speech of our Lord, Feed my sheep, there was a kind of renewal† of the Apostleship formerly bestowed upon him, doing away the infamy of his fall, and blotting out the cowardice of human infirmity.” Where a great person of our own hath justly remarked that word “renewal:”‡ he doth not say that our Lord *augmented* his dignity (which is the new doctrine), but that he *renewed* it, or *restored* him to it. Which dignity he had said in the beginning of this discourse Peter was advanced unto, when our Lord named him, not *præ aliis*, above others, but *cum aliis*,§ with other disciples, to be an Apostle; and therefore now did not give him more than the rest, but only declared he did not take the forfeiture he had made of that dignity, but reinstated him in it together with the rest.

This is undoubtedly the ancient sense of Christ’s Church; to which I know not what to add for the explication of these words, unless it be this, that Peter had just before this discourse of our Lord’s begun to express his earnest desire to recover his favour; casting himself into the sea (when the other disciples came by the ship) to get to our Saviour; which may be looked upon as a token of excessive love to him, and of a more than ordinary desire to enjoy his company. From hence

\* Seventh Point, n. 7.

† Ἀνανέωσις, ὡς περ τις, &c. L. xii. in Joh. p. 1120.

‡ Bishop Andrew’s Tortura Torti, p. 51.

§ Ὁμοῦ τοῖς ἑτέροις, Cyrill. Ib.

a very learned writer\* of this Church thinks our Lord takes occasion to make this speech to him (but whether to check or to cherish that desire, he dares not determine), the import of which he gives in this paraphrase: "Thou hast made profession of more than ordinary love to me, of readiness to lay down thy life for my sake, though all others, even these thy fellows, should forsake me; and art willing, I see, by thy present hazard of it, to make good thy former words. But wouldst thou have me yet to shew thee a more excellent way? I have told it thee long since; thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Simon, the son of Jona, if thou desirest to prove thyself a Cephas, or testify thy sincerity of faith and love (which by the powers of darkness were of late so grievously shaken), Feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Yea, seeing thou thrice deniedst the Shepherd of thy soul, I say unto thee the third time, Feed my sheep. Let the memory of thy fore-passed threefold sin, also let this my present threefold admonition, excite thee unto triple diligence in thy charge, to shew such pity and compassion as I have shewed to thee, unto that lost and scattered flock which have denied me, or consented to my crucifying. Let thy faithful performance of what I request at my farewell, be the first testimony of thy love to me, to be lastly testified by the loss of thy life; which thou didst promise me, when I gave mine for my sheep, John xiii. 37, but shalt not pay till thou hast fulfilled this my request. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but when thou art old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not," &c.

These things being well considered, there is no necessity, I think, to dispute about the meaning of the word "feed," (which is still a metaphor, it is fit to observe, as well as the two former, "rock" and "keys;") for whatsoever can be thought to be meant thereby, all the Apostles were required to do it as well as Peter, and had the lambs and the sheep committed to their care, as much as he. But because there are very great things which many of the Roman doctors draw from this single word "feed," and there are also very curious observations made about the small word "my," and about "lambs and sheep" (that is, about every word of this short sentence), it will not be unprofitable briefly to examine upon what foundation they stand.

\* Dr. Jackson, Book iii. upon the Creed, c. 7.

I. Now, by the word "Feed," they understand the highest power\* to have been committed to him; which if it were true, then all to whom it is said, "Feed the flock" had the highest power: and so there were many supremes, all the elders of Ephesus (it hath been shewn before) being required "to feed the Church of God," Acts xx. 28; which includes in it, nobody doubts, authority and rule; but [that] is not the thing principally, much less only, intended; and is far from signifying the highest power. For the Greek word for feed† in the first mention of this charge, "Feed my lambs," ver. 15, and in the last, "Feed my sheep," ver. 17, imports nothing of ruling or governing, nor was ever applied to signify the power of princes; but denotes merely the simple office of leading the flock to their pasture. And, accordingly, the ancient Fathers commonly refer these words to the feeding by word and doctrine, to which they had more regard than to mere rule and power, which is now the only thing that is contended for from this poor word "feed."

And that because once, ver. 16, our Lord uses a word which is translated to this sense. Translated,‡ I say, for it originally signifies no more than the other before-named, denoting nothing of dominion or empire. For a man may be a shepherd of the sheep, who is not their lord. But it is applied to kings, and to God himself, not because it is apt to denote the absolute dominion of God over all creatures, or the highest power of kings over their subjects, but to give us to understand how God is affected towards us, and to admonish kings of their duty; which is, to govern their people committed to their charge, gently and diligently, as a shepherd doth his flock. There are many places of Scripture that justify this, which I shall not so much as mention, because there is no reason why this word only should be regarded, and the other neglected; nor why the other§ should not rather interpret this|| (being twice repeated, and this used but once), than this interpret the other; nor why either should signify ruling after the manner of a prince, and not of a pastor; nor (if we allow the utmost that can be made of it) why they should suppose Peter to have had any pre-eminence in this authority over the flock of Christ, which was not grounded upon his eminent affectionate care, and more than ordinary fidelity in feeding it.

\* Summam Potestatem. Bellarm. l. 1. de P. R. c. 15.

† Βόσκει.

§ Βόσκέ.

‡ Ποίμαινε.

|| Ποίμαινε.

And yet, such is the desire of dominion in some people, they have not only made Peter universal Pastor, with an ordinary power (as they call it), which no other Apostle had, but found him a successor also in this power, and without any deed of conveyance but this one word “feed” made the Pope of Rome his sole heir; unto whom they ascribe the most exorbitant power, derived to him from St. Peter, sole heir to the great Shepherd of the sheep, Christ Jesus. If you would know what this power is, Bellarmine will inform you: who, here and there in his works, asserts the power of the Bishop of Rome to extend unto five great things; for the support of which he alleges these words, “Feed my sheep.”

First, He saith that he is made hereby the supreme judge in controversies of faith.\* “Nothing can be more clearly spoken in the Gospel, than that which our Lord said to Peter in the presence of the rest of the Apostles, Feed my sheep. For he spake to Peter only, and he gave him all his sheep to feed, so that he did not exclude the Apostles themselves. Now it is indubitable, that it is one of the offices of a pastor to discern good pasture from bad.”

Secondly, He proceeds from hence also to make the Pope an infallible judge.† “For in these words, saith he, Feed my sheep, the Pope was made the pastor and doctor of the whole Church; and if so, then the whole Church is bound to hear and to follow him; so that if he err, the whole Church will err.”

Thirdly, Hence also he derives his power to make laws for the whole Church.‡ “For Christ,” says he, “giving Peter what he promised, uses a kingly word, *viz. Ποίμαινε*.” And therefore,

Fourthly, He proves by this, that the Pope is absolutely above the whole Church, even above a General Council.§ “For since Christ the good Shepherd hath communicated to Peter his own name in these words, Feed my sheep, it is plain the pastor is so above the sheep, that he can in no wise be judged by them.”

Fifthly, In fine, he proceeds so far, as from these words to prove the Pope’s temporal power over princes;|| whom, if they

\* L. iv. de Pont. Rom. c. 1. [Pragæ, 1721. vol. 1. p. 445. n. 6, 7.]

† Ib. cap. iii. tertio. [Ibid. p. 452. n. 33.]

‡ Ib. cap. 16. [Ibid. cap. 15.]

§ L. 2. de Conciliis, c. xvii.

|| L. 5. de Rom. Pontif. cap. vii. [Debent autem reges Deo servire defendendo Ecclesiam puniendoque hæreticos et schismaticos. Ergo potest



be heretics, for instance, he may "not only excommunicate, but command the people also not to obey them, and therefore to deprive them of their dominion over their subjects." Wherein he doth but follow some of their Popes, viz. Gregory VII. Boniface VIII. and Nicholas IV., who in their Decretals allege this place, to maintain the power which they challenged to themselves in temporal things.

But these are such far-fetched and absurd inferences from these words, that to name them, as was said before, is to confute them: this being not to interpret the Scripture, but to torture it, and force it to say what they please, though never so much against its meaning; which some in their own communion are so sensible of, that they abhor such violent abuses of God's holy Word, and openly declare there are no such things as these to be found therein. One\* more particularly hath demonstrated Bellarmine's arguments to be sophistical and against the rules of the Council of Trent, when he proves from these words ["Feed my sheep"] the Pope's superiority over General Councils, and his unerring judgment in matters of faith; and shews that forty Popes of Rome, by calling every bishop of the Church their "fellow bishops," have openly declared these words "Feed my sheep" are not proper to them alone; and that this is a most certain tradition of the Roman Church itself, by its bishops; which he proves from Stephen I. to Innocent III., by near two hundred and twenty testimonies; which, if they be not sufficient to make a tradition, there can never be any sufficient tradition (as he speaks), it being scarce possible there should be anything better testified.

And another† also more lately hath overthrown these presumptuous assertions; shewing that all the Apostles and their successors were pastors of the flock of Christ, who spake to them in the person of Peter, when he said "Feed my sheep;" and that if these words had been spoken to Peter alone and his successors, they would not have proved them to be infallible,‡ or their authority to be above that of a General Council;§ much less their authority over kings or their

ac debet regibus jubere ut hoc faciant et nisi fecerint etiam cogere per excommunicationem aliasque commodas rationes. Ibid. p. 507. n. 21.]

\* Launoy Epist. pars ii. et pars v.

† Lud. El. du Pin. [p. 308. Paris. 1686.]

‡ De antiquæ Ecclesiæ Discipl. Dissert. v. [Ibid. p. 342.]

§ Dissert. vi. [Ibid. p. 377.]

dominions, either directly or indirectly, the Church universal having always understood these words to speak of a spiritual power only. "And therefore they that are not ashamed to interpret them otherwise depart from the sense of the Catholic Church, that they may, by any means, defend their unlawful attempts."\*

II. But if the word "feed" alone will not do this great business, Bellarmine hopes the next little word "my" will assist mightily to the establishing St. Peter's universal pastorphism. For he saith it furnishes them with a notable reason, why all the flock that called Christ their owner should be looked upon as his :\* "For since Christ adds, without any restriction, the pronoun *my* to the noun *sheep*, it manifestly signifies, that all those sheep were committed to Peter which can be called Christ's sheep ; and it is certain all are Christ's sheep, none excepted."

Unto which if any one should think fit to reply (as no mean persons have done) : That our Lord in the word "my" (if any emphasis must be laid upon it), pointed to those who had been his own peculiar charge in his life-time, when "he was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," I appeal to all men of sense, whether it would not be a more reasonable exposition than his ; especially when they shall consider that these "lost sheep," the Jews, were afterwards the peculiar care of St. Peter, unto whom "the Gospel of the circumcision was committed, as the Gospel of the uncircumcision to St. Paul ; for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the Apostleship of the circumcision, *i. e.* of the Jews, the same was mighty in me, says St. Paul, towards the Gentiles," &c. Gal. ii. 7, 8.

But there is no need of this interpretation, nor do I rely upon it ; since our Lord expressly declared in his life-time, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd," John x. 16 : all which sheep were committed to the care not of Peter alone, but of all the Apostles : every one of which had an equal share in his charge ; though Peter (as I have shewn), had need to be particularly excited to do his part of this office, and to feed as many as he could possibly, seeing the proof of his love to

\* Dissert. 7. p. 485.

† L. 1. de Rom. Pontif. cap. 16. [Pragæ, 1721. vol. 1. p. 316. n. 8.]

Christ and of his fidelity, in which he had lamentably failed, did therein consist.

III. After all this they make pleasant work with the words "lambs" and "sheep," which they say includes the whole Church, Apostles and all: so that they who were pastors no less than Peter, are turned into simple sheep, who were to be led by him. Which is confuted by the whole history of the Gospel, and by all antiquity; nothing being plainer than that Peter did not so much as nominate a successor to Judas, much less take upon him by his sole authority to appoint one: but the whole college of the Apostles appointed two persons to be presented to God, desiring Him to shew which he had chosen, Acts i. 23, 24. Nor did he ordain St. Stephen and the other six deacons; but the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and bade them look out seven men, &c. "whom *we* (not Peter alone) may appoint over this business," Acts vi. 3. Nay, more than all this, Peter was so far from exercising supreme authority over them, that the Apostles sent *him*, as there was occasion, not he *them*, to do an Apostolical office; and also sent John in joint commission with him, Acts viii. 14. And I have observed already, how St. Paul withstood him to his face, and that publicly, when he was in an error: which can no way consist with the supposition of his being inferior to Peter in order or power; for though an inferior may privately give his advice to a superior, yet to call the supreme Governor in question, and to reprove him before all is intolerable presumption and contempt of authority.

But this conceit is so very dear to them, that the late Catholic Scripturist could not forego it, but is pleased to tell us, that if every one of the other Apostles be sheep of Christ, St. Peter is here made pastor to every one of them, for he is commanded to feed them. And others are so fond of it, as to find a mystery in these words; which, the better to accommodate to their fancies, they turn into three, instead of two only which are in the Greek.\* And by lambs, ver. 15, and by little sheep (as they will needs have it read, ver. 16,) understand the Jews and the Gentiles: and by sheep, ver. 17, the bishops of the Church; who are, saith Bellarmine,† "as it were the ewes or mothers of the lambs; and therefore the Lord committed to Peter the care of the lambs, *i. e.* of the people of the Jews; and of the little sheep, *i. e.* the people of the Gentiles;

\* 'Αρνία and πρόβατα.

† L. 1. de Rom. Pontif. cap. 16.

and of the sheep, that is, they that brought forth these lambs in Christ, which are Apostles and Bishops. Or, by lambs," he saith, "we may understand mere laics, the people who have no pastoral care, being only children, not fathers in Christ; and by the little sheep, inferior priests, who are so the fathers of the people, that they are bishops' sons; and by sheep the great priests, that is, bishops who are so set over both lambs and lambkins, that they are notwithstanding subject themselves to Peter." That is, you may understand this mystery how you please, if you but so contrive it that Peter have all under his care, and the Apostles themselves be his curates.

But they who can be pleased with such conceits as these, have little reverence for the Holy Scriptures; and it is a great affront to our understandings to offer us mere imaginations for reasons, their own dreams instead of the Divine Oracles. If it may consist with Christian sobriety to make such a nice distinction between lambs and sheep, as to make them imply different things (any more than the two several words for feed,\* and for Lovest thou me, are thought to do), it is far more likely that our Lord intended to signify the care that ought to be taken of all Christians suitable to the diversity of their states; "some of which," as a great man† of our own Church speaks, "are to be handled tenderly, and cherished like lambs; others to be looked unto like elder sheep, and to be fed with stronger meat, but with less personal or assiduous attendance."

This hath some sense in it, which is very useful, and agreeable to all men's thoughts; but if we set our fancies on work, they abound with vain conceits of which we can find no end. For if lambs, and lambkins, and sheep only be St. Peter's walk, and he the shepherd, where are the rams? as a no less learned‡ than ingenious man asks; they are excepted, it seems, and rams, as Turrianus fancies, are the Apostles, or their successors, that is, Bishops; or as Cardinal Tolet§ (Bellarmine's equal) will have it, they are kings and princes; and so these two, apostles and kings, are by this interpretation both shut out; whom Bellarmine intended by his device to have shut into Peter's fold.

But the graver sort of writers even in the Roman church,

\* Βόσκει and ποιμαίνει, ἀγαπᾷς and φιλεῖς.

† Dr. Jackson, B. 3. c. 7. sect. 10.

‡ Dr. Collin's EPHPHATA, p. 51.

§ In xv. Joh. Annot. 3.



are ashamed of such mysteries as these, which they see may be invented at pleasure. Maldonate\* himself (to say nothing of Jansenius) bids those who subtilly inquire, why Christ calls his disciples lambs rather than sheep, think again and again what they do, and take heed lest they expose themselves to the laughter of the learned; for the difference is in word, not in sense; save only, that the word lamb hath something in it more soft and tender, and might be used to commend them the more to Peter's affection. For this diminutive form of speech is a sign of very tender and ardent love, and more moving than any other; as appears by the common instance of a dying father, who expresses more of his own affection and works more upon his friends, if he says, "I commend to you the care of my little babes," than if he simply says, "I commend the care of my children to you." Whence it is our Saviour sometimes used this form, just before he parted with his disciples, John xiii. 33: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you," &c.: and his Apostles also, particularly St. John, who uses it seven times in his first Epistle, to declare the greatness and tenderness of his love, and to excite the like in others.

That writer† indeed pursues not less than the other the pretensions of the Church of Rome from these words, though he like not this curiosity; insisting upon Christ's committing all the sheep, *i. e.* all Christians, to Peter. Which will not do their business, since they were no otherwise committed to him than they were to the rest of Christ's Apostles; who had the same power given them, and were to take the same care of all Christ's flock that he did. Not that every one of them was to feed or teach all Christians, simply and universally understood; for that was impossible, and would have made the labours of the rest useless, if one were sufficient; but all indefinitely, so that among them none should be neglected, but instructed by some or other of them. This must necessarily be the meaning; for otherwise, our Lord bade Peter do that which could not be done by one man, or if it could have been done, would have made all the other Apostles idle, and left them nothing to do.

No, say they, we do not mean that Peter alone was to preach the Gospel to all nations; so he could not feed all; but this sort of feeding must be allowed to others. But he alone was to rule and govern in chief, to feed by authority and

\* In Joh. xxi. 15, &c.

† Maldonate.

power over all, whereby he was to prescribe what was to be taught and believed.

But this is to return where we were before, to the signification of the word "feed;" which cannot mean one thing with respect to Peter, and another with respect to the rest; but signifies the same power, be it what it will, common to them all. If this need any further explication, those words of our Lord, "Go, and teach all nations," Matth. xxviii. 19; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature," Mark xvi. 15, will satisfy us, that Peter had no peculiar authority conferred on him above the other Apostles; for he gave this charge to them all, and it was ushered in with a far more magnificent preface to it, than when he spake here particularly to Peter; for he first acquaints them with his own supreme authority, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," and then adds, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," &c.; which is a commission as large as could be given to men, including in it all the power that was necessary for the establishing and governing those Churches which they should gather unto Christ.

Who can think that they who had this authority given them, were themselves to be taught and governed by Peter alone? Nothing could put such a conceit into men's minds, but an ambitious desire to advance themselves to the highest dominion by raising Peter above all others: who, it is evident, did not take themselves to be all inferior to him; nor to be less able to feed him, than he was to feed them. For St. Paul (who was herein inferior that he was called late to be an Apostle, as "one born out of due time") did take upon him to feed Peter, and that with his staff too, if I may so speak, that is, with his reproof; and this at Antioch, St. Peter's own seat; where it had been very proper for him, one would think, to have stood upon his peculiar prerogative, if he had known of any belonging to him.

Which if he could have challenged, we should still be to seek by what right the Bishop of Rome claims the same authority that St. Peter had. O, says Boniface VIII.\* Christ spake to Peter and to his successors, when he said "Feed my sheep." But how doth he prove that? Why, we must take his bare word for it, both that he spake these words to Peter's successors and to them alone, and that the bishops of Rome

\* Extravagant. L. 1. tit. 8. de Major. et Obedientia.

are his sole successors : all this he delivers as an infallible dictator, and it is not good manners to question that the universal flock of Christ is so committed to them, that “whether Greeks or others shall say, they are not committed to Peter and his successors, they must necessarily confess they are none of the sheep of Christ.” But it is worth any body’s while to read on to the end of that *Extravagant* where he asserts this ; whereby they will be infallibly satisfied he was no infallible interpreter, but a gross perverter, of the holy Scriptures. For here it is that he proves in the Church there is both the spiritual and the temporal power, from those words, “Behold here are two swords,” Luke xxii. 38 ; and that the temporal power is subject to the spiritual, because “the powers that are, are ordained of God,” Rom. xiii. 1 ; for they would not be in order, unless sword were under sword, and spiritual things are superior to temporal : for the prophecy of Jeremy is verified of the Church and the ecclesiastical power, chap. i. 10, “Behold, I have set thee this day over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root up and pull down,” &c. : therefore the temporal power, if it go out of the way, must be judged by the spiritual ; but the supreme spiritual power, by God alone, not by man, as the Apostle bears witness, 1 Cor. ii. 15, “He that is spiritual judgeth all things, but he himself is judged of no man.” After all which goodly interpretation of holy Scriptures, more like Pasquil than the Pope, he concludes most pontifically, “We declare, affirm, define, and pronounce, that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Pope of Rome.”

This is his conclusion from “Feed my sheep,” and from other places of Scripture expounded after the very same fashion as he abuses this : which though it be very presumptuous, yet is not too arrogant for him who could entertain such a monstrous conceit, as this which we read in one of his decrees,\* where he says, “Christ made Peter the chief, that from him as from a certain head, he might diffuse as it were his gifts into the whole body ; for that having taken him in CONSORTIUM INDIVIDUÆ TRINITATIS, into the partnership of the undivided Trinity, he would have him called that which the Lord himself was, saying, THOU ART PETER, and upon THIS ROCK I will build my Church.” Now if Peter be thus exalted into the consortship of the blessed Trinity, and the Pope have a just

\* Sexti Decret. L. 1. tit. 6. cap. 17, Fundamenta.

claim unto all that belongs to Peter, then is the Pope no less than OUR LORD GOD, as some of the canonists have called him ; unto whom Boniface might well conclude all must be subject, upon pain of damnation.

I conclude this whole discourse with these three observations, which are better grounded than their proud decrees.

First, It is worth considering, that this lofty structure which they have erected in the Church of Rome, of the supremacy of their bishop, is built barely upon three metaphorical speeches of our Saviour unto Peter, without one word or syllable concerning the Bishop of Rome, or any other successor. One would have expected that a thing of this mighty moment should have had a stronger foundation, and been delivered in plainer words than "upon this rock," "I will give thee the keys," and "feed my sheep:" and that we should have been told also in downright terms who should inherit the supreme power, supposed to be conferred by these metaphorical speeches, when he was dead and gone, especially if all Christians in the world must necessarily, upon pain of damnation, be subject to Peter's successor.

And yet so it is, this is all that a wit of such height as Bellarmine's (who is wont to scrape up all that any way seems to make for his purpose) durst venture to allege out of the holy Scriptures for the proof of so weighty a point.

The Rhemists indeed, in their Annotations upon the New Testament, make bold with two places more, which they apply to this business ; but with so little reason (not to say so ridiculously), that he had the discretion to let them alone.

One is in St. Matthew, xiv. 29 ; where, upon the word 'walked,' they have this wise note : "Peter," saith St. Bernard, "walking upon the waters as Christ did, DECLARED himself the ONLY VICAR of Christ, which should be ruler not over one people but over ALL ; for many waters are many people. And from hence he deduceth the like authority and jurisdiction to his successors the bishops of Rome."

And a goodly deduction it is, for which they are mightily beholden to St. Bernard, who could spy such a notable declaration of St. Peter's sole vicarship, and draw from thence such a fine argument for the Pope's authority, as no ancient doctor besides himself was able to find in this place. But must his fancies pass for substantial proofs of the Bishop of Rome's supremacy, which was raised to a great height in his days ? At this rate nobody need want proofs for the most detestable



heresies which he shall please to devise, if such conceits as these be allowed for arguments.

And their second annotation is like to this, of which, for aught I know, they may have the honour to be the inventors, without the help of St. Bernard. For because our Saviour, when there were two ships, went in that which was Simon's, Luke v. 3, and thence taught the people, they gravely conclude, that undoubtedly he taught out of that ship, and not the other, on purpose to signify the Church resembled by Peter's ship, and that in it is the chair of Christ, and only true preaching. By which it is evident, they intended the reader should understand, that as Peter was owner of that ship, so he and his successors are rulers of the whole Church. For upon the following verses, ver. 7, 10, they observe how Peter had so much work that he was fain to call for help, and "joined those who were in the other ship as co-partners in the preaching of the Gospel;" as much as to say, the work was committed to him alone, who took in such help as he needed. He was the only pastor, and all the rest, as was said before, his curates. For, they tell us, "all this aforesaid did properly mean his travails in the conversion of the world, and his prerogative therein before all men; as is evident by Christ's special promise made to him SEVERALLY and APART in this place, that he should be made the TAKER OF MEN." What then became of all the rest? Were they to sit still in their ship and do nothing? O no, by no means: "He giveth to other (say these annotators) the like office, as to Peter's co-operators and co-adjutors."

Before, they said that Peter called them and joined them to himself as co-partners in the preaching of the Gospel; but now having better (it seems) bethought themselves, they say Christ appointed them to this office; yet still they are but as Peter's co-operators and assistants. He was the taker of men, and converted the world; they only came in to his help, and brought all the fish into his net. Their ship signified nothing, it was Peter alone that signified all. Their ship stands for a mere cypher; his ship is the figure of the whole Church, where he governs, and they are but helps in government, mere co-adjutors unto him, the great, and indeed only, bishop over all.

Who can endure such annotations as these, in which men play with the holy Scriptures as they please, and play with them in so saucy a manner, as to interpret them directly against the Scriptures: in which the Apostles call themselves workers

together with Christ, 2 Cor. vi. 1, employed by him to be his co-operators, not St. Peter's, who was so far from being the converter of the world, that his travails and pains were most bestowed in the least part of it. Which Bellarmine, I suppose, saw well enough, and therefore was so wise as not to mention such allegories, which may serve to entertain the fancies of silly people, but are the just scorn of those that have any measure of spiritual understanding; who have heard perhaps that the Fathers sometimes resembled the Church of Christ to Peter's ship, but not that they ever dreamed of making him, and the Bishop of Rome after him, the Governor of the whole Church, because he was master of that ship.

There is nothing more unaccountable than such a conclusion, unless it be their pretence to infallibility, who are mere triflers when they meddle with the holy Scriptures, which is the next thing I would have observed.

Secondly, If the danger of wresting the Scriptures be a good reason why the common people should not read them, then nobody at all should look into them; for their most learned priests have wrested them more than the common people: and that against their oath, whereby they are bound to interpret Scripture according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, who all agree that what was said to Peter in these three places belonged to all the Apostles, whose writings, as the rest of the Scriptures, have by none been more foully abused than by the Popes of Rome, whose interpretations and applications of them, should they be collected in a book, would make one of the most shameful pieces that hath been yet extant in the world.

Thirdly, And let the reader observe once more how ill they of that Church are agreed about the interpretation of these three places of Scripture, which are the subject of this discourse.

There are four interpretations of the first place, "Thou art Peter," &c. (as hath been elsewhere observed), which have had great authors in the Roman Church, as well as others. Some by "rock" understand Peter's FAITH in the confession he had newly made (which by the way Joh. Eckius\* says in the age before us, nobody denied to be the sense, and bids Luther name the man that said otherwise): others CHRIST himself, whom Peter had confessed to be the Son of God: others PETER: and others, ALL the APOSTLES; which last is the exposition of

\* L. 1. contra Luther. de Petri Primatu, c. 13.

Paschasius Radbertus, the famous broacher of transubstantiation, whose words are these, "The Church of God is built not only upon Peter, but upon all the Apostles."\* Now they who follow the first and second sense can find no prerogative here for St. Peter above the rest of the Apostles; and they that adhere only to the third (in opposition to the other, as they now commonly do) are confuted by those who assert the fourth, that these words were spoken to all the Apostles.

And indeed they are all forced to confess, that nothing is here promised which is not contained in the next words, "and I will give thee the keys," &c. But what this is, none of them can certainly tell. For one sort, such as Cajetan, hold the keys contain more than binding and loosing; which Bellarmine says is false, nay, a thing never heard of in the Church. And consequently this power of binding and loosing being promised to them all, Matth. xviii. 18, the power of the keys was promised to them all; and Christ promising nothing but what he performed, he gave therefore the highest power to them all, which is contained in the keys.

Here they are at a great loss, and cannot agree how to bring themselves off from this difficulty, which strips Peter of his supremacy. Therefore some have devised the above-named conceit, that Peter alone had the keys given to him as their ordinary, and they as his legates. But this seems too gross unto others, who acknowledge they all had the keys immediately from God, as much as Peter, if they be considered as Apostles, but not if they be considered as bishops and pastors; for these two offices they fancy they had, the Apostolical and the pastoral dignity; the first immediately from Christ, the other by and under Peter. But this is in a manner the same thing in a little finer dress, which was said before. Therefore others unsatisfied with this, that the Apostles should receive their jurisdiction from Peter, have ordered the matter on this fashion, that Peter might use the keys alone, but they not without him.

But Sixtus Senensis cannot digest this; and therefore hath devised a threefold power in Peter, of Apostleship, of order, and of the kingdom.† With respect to the first, he grants Paul was equal to Peter, because he had the office of preaching the Gospel not from Peter, but from God, as much

\* L. 4. in Matthæum.

† Biblioth. Sanct. l. 5. Annot. clxix.

as Peter himself had. With respect to the second also, he acknowledges the truth of what St. Jerome writes against Jovinian, that "all the Apostles equally received the keys" (let the Catholic Scripturist mind that), "and firmly laid the foundation of the Church:" and of what he says to Evagrius, "All bishops are equal, because all the Apostles were so." But then with respect to the last, viz. the power of the kingdom, and authority over all bishops and churches, Peter was head of all: that is, Peter must some way or other be above all the rest, but how, they do not know.

For Cardinal Baronius will have it,\* that all the Apostles had the use of the keys equally with Peter, by the "ORDINARY power of remitting sins;" and by this distinction expounds the fore-named words of St. Jerome. But his brother, Cardinal Bellarmine, being aware, that, if Peter had the keys more than any of the rest, by an EXTRAORDINARY power, his authority would not descend upon any of his successors, says quite contrary, that the Apostles had the power of the keys after an EXTRAORDINARY manner, and Peter only by an ORDINARY.† Thus what one builds up, his fellow pulls down. There is a confusion of tongues in this Babel, which they labour to erect. They cannot agree so much as about the terms, wherein they deliver this new doctrine. For it is a pure invention, without any reason, or any authority for it: but it must be so, though they know not how, because it is their pleasure.

As all the rest is, which they draw from the last place, "feed my sheep;" in which they say, Christ gave the power which he had promised; and therefore since he promised it to all, he gave it to all, if any thing was given here. And yet, against such clear demonstration, they will have this to be a peculiar grant to Peter; nobody knows how or why, but because it seems good to them. For this is so little approved by others, that they fairly grant the ancient opinion was (and make it theirs), that these words were not spoken to Peter in a personal, but in a public capacity, as he represented all the Apostles. Insomuch that they can find nothing peculiar to him in the word "FEED," because of that of St. Austin,‡ "When Christ said to Peter, he said to all, Feed my sheep:"

\* Ad An. 34. n. ccv.

† L. 1. de Rom. Pont. c. 12. [Pragæ, 1721. vol. 1. p. 310. n. 59.]

‡ De Agone Christi, c. 30.



Nor in the word "SHEEP," because St. Ambrose saith, in the place before named, "Those sheep not only Peter received ; but he received them with us, and we received them with him." Which things are so evident, that it hath brought some in that communion to this conclusion, that out of none of these three places, nor all of them together, can be gathered so much as the bare primacy of St. Peter,\* after that manner which Bellarmine collects it : but it must be gathered thus, that in those places "Peter bears the person of the Church, speaks for the rest of the Apostles, and is himself spoken unto by Christ in their name, as the first and principal."

Behold then the UNITY of which they boast in that Church ; and how little certainty there is among them, even of the main point of their faith, and as Bellarmine† makes bold to call it, "the sum of Christian religion."

It stands upon such a tottering foundation, that, finding how little these texts in the New Testament avail them, they ransack the old, to fetch some feeble support unto it from thence. And the late Catholic Scripturist fancies the Old Testament helps them thus far in this point, that it teaches, "That among the priests of the old law, one was chosen successively to be the highest and chief priest. Commanding all such causes as are ecclesiastical causes to be brought to the tribunal of the high-priest, and his sentence to be obeyed even under pain of death."‡ And for this he alleges Deut. xvii. 8.

But this only proves how ignorant such Catholics as he are in the Holy Scriptures ; where it is impossible for him to find that the high-priests were chosen successively ; for they had that dignity by inheritance, in one certain family, and not by election. And as for the power which he ascribes to them (though he promises us in his preface to produce loud-speaking texts for all the points we mislike in their religion), there is not so much as a whisper of it in the place he alleges ; the words of which he did wisely not to quote, but only the chapter and verse : which we that have the liberty to read the Bible, can easily discern speak loudly against him, and confute that doctrine which he would confirm by them. "If there arise," says Moses in that text, "a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and

\* Du Pin. de antiquæ Eccles. Discipl. Dissert. 4. p. 311.

† Præfatio in L. de Pontific. Rom.

‡ Seventh Point, n. 1, 3.

plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates ; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire, and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place (which the Lord shall choose) shall shew thee," &c.

I need not recite the rest at large to the end of the 12th verse ; for every understanding reader must evidently see, without going further, that he speaks not a syllable of the power of the high-priest, but of the authority of the supreme tribunal or court among the Jews, which consisted of a great number of persons, wherein all controversies, which could not be ended in inferior courts, were to be finally determined without any appeal.

In which supreme court, the high-priest was so far from being the chief, that he was not so much as admitted to be a member of it, unless he was a wise man.

And then, he did not bear an absolute sway there, but the sentence was passed by the whole Council ; as appears (not merely from the Jewish writers, but) from these repeated admonitions in the very body of this law : "THEY shall shew thee the sentence of judgment," ver. 9 ; and "thou shalt do according to that thing, which THEY of that place shew thee ;" and "observe to do according to all that THEY inform thee," ver. 10, "according to the sentence of the law which THEY shall teach thee ;" "according to the judgment which THEY shall tell thee : " "Thou shalt not decline from the sentence which THEY shall shew thee," ver. 11. Where he must be blind who doth not see six flat contradictions to the assertion of this Catholic Scripturist in this very place, which he produces to prove that Moses here sets up the tribunal of the high-priest, and orders his sentence to be obeyed upon pain of death in causes ecclesiastical.

This was neither his court, nor were causes judged by his sentence, nor is there one word here of causes ecclesiastical, but only of civil, "between blood and blood, plea and plea, stroke and stroke ;" unless we suppose the word we translate "stroke" relates to the plague of the leprosy, which belonged to the priests to judge of it, but excluded men from all civil as well as sacred society.

And if the utmost be granted that can be supposed [that

there is mention here of something appertaining to spiritual causes], yet it must be also allowed by all men of sense, that this text speaks most of civil causes ; and therefore can no more prove an absolute obedience to be due to spiritual than to civil governors.

All which considered, I do not see but Dr. Reynolds had reason to say, that they might as well call in the help of the first words of Genesis [“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”] as this verse in Deuteronomy, to support the Pope’s supremacy : “For there,” as Pope Boniface VIII. very gravely observes in the forementioned Extravagant, “Moses says, God created the heavens and the earth, in the beginning, not in the beginnings ; and therefore he who resists the Pope’s authority, resists the ordinance of God ; unless (with Manichæus) he feign two beginnings (or principles), which is false and heretical.”

And by such fine fetches as this Innocent III.\* proved his power over the whole Church from these words in Deuteronomy : but he did not mince the matter, as this Catholic Scripturist doth, but stoutly affirmed that the Pope may exercise temporal jurisdiction, as well as spiritual, not only in the Church’s patrimony, but in other countries also, in certain causes. For, “Deuteronomy being by interpretation a second law, it proves by the very force of the word, that what is here decreed in Deut. xvii. 8, ought to be observed in the New Testament. And then the place which the Lord hath chosen, is the Apostolical See, *viz.* Rome ; the Levitical priests are his brethren, the cardinals ; the high-priest or judge is the Pope, the vicar of him who is a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck, appointed by God the Judge of quick and dead : the first sort of judgments between blood and blood, is meant of criminal and civil causes ; the last, between stroke and stroke, is meant of ecclesiastical and criminal ; the middle, between plea and plea, belongeth to both ecclesiastical and civil ; in which, if any one condemn the sentence of the Apostolic See, he is doomed to die ; that is, to be separated by the sentence of excommunication, as a dead man, from the communion of the faithful.”

Nothing is more evident than that, according to this Catholic exposition of Pope Innocent, the Bishop of Rome is, by the Divine Law, head of all Christians, as well in civil causes as in

\* Decret. Greg. L. 4. tit. 17. c. 13. per Venerabilem.

ecclesiastical. This text in Deuteronomy proves the one as much as the other : that is, it proves just nothing, but that the mystery of iniquity wrought very high, when such mystical senses of Holy Scripture were swallowed glibly, to confirm the chiefest mystery of the Romish faith.

Perhaps the Catholic Scripturist will say, that they now argue from this place only by a parity of reason, that there must be but one high-priest among Christians, because there was no more among the Jews. To which they may have an answer, when they prove that Judea was as big as the whole Christian world.

That's as hopeful a task for him to labour in, as any he hath undertaken. And so I take my leave of him till he hath finished it ; for it will be too tedious to follow him to his next text out of the New Testament, Matth. xxiii. 2, which he calls an unanswerable text concerning the high-priests of the old law. " Upon the chair of Moses have sitten the Scribes and Pharisees ; all therefore whatsoever they shall say unto you, observe and do it." For nobody but himself can see a syllable here concerning the high-priests, who did not sit in Moses's chair, but were the successors of Aaron. And besides that, this place belongs to another head of their doctrine, about the Pope's infallibility ; of which if this be a proof, it likewise proves the infallibility of Annas and Caiaphas, and justifies those that crucified our blessed Lord and Saviour.

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THE TEXTS EXAMINED WHICH PAPISTS CITE OUT OF  
THE BIBLE, FOR THE PROOF OF THEIR DOCTRINE  
CONCERNING THE VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

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CHAP. III.

IN that part of the controversy which we have with those of the Church of Rome, under this head, of the Visibility of the Church, it is absolutely necessary to state the case with all clearness imaginable; because by doing this, it will on the one side appear, that those texts which are cited by the Romanists, have no other concern than with the Church militant here on earth, generally considered: and on the other side, that those of the learned Protestants that have defended the invisibility of the Church, have mainly refuted themselves under the notion of the Church universal. For this is certain, if this be the definition of the Church, that it is *Cætus Fidelium*, or the Company of the Faithful, that is, the company of all those that are already possessed of their eternal happiness with God, and of all those that are now in the way toward that happiness; as also of those who to the end of the world shall be ever called to the obtainment of it; if, I say, we take all this in, as necessary to the definition of the Church, then all the proofs of Scripture that are brought to argue the diffusiveness, and most glorious figure the Church hath made in this world, are impertinent to the purpose, as to its visibility; because, as to that part of it which is in heaven, and as to that part of it which is not yet in being, only in the eternal purpose of God, it must still be to us invisible: neither can it possibly be supposed, under this notion, as one common society united under any one mortal man as its vicarious and substituted head, or indeed under any other government than that which the blessed Jesus, the Lord of all, universally maintains.

Again, if the notion of the Church were to be limited (as some have done) to those only who from eternity were elect and predestinate, and in time are effectually called by the Spirit of God, and inwardly endued with those graces and virtues that are necessary to qualify for everlasting happiness; then, also, there is no possible proof can be alleged to make the Church (thus considered) in any age visible; because God only knows

the hearts, and tries the spirits: these graces are inward, and however they may and will (according to the notion such have) unavoidably exert themselves in most excellent fruits of a good life; yet they are such as may be so counterfeited by the hypocrite, that they cannot be always distinguished, but by the all-seeing eye that discerns into the very root and principle of all. So that, under either of these notions, the Church is invisible, nor can it possibly be otherwise. And thus considered, as some have rightly observed, the Church is the subject of our faith, and not our sight; to which therefore they have applied that article in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe the holy Catholic Church;" that is, though I cannot possibly see it as it is catholic and universal, yet I believe it.

There is no question, but as to the notion of the Church in general, it is (as Bellarmine\* himself expresseth it, deriving it from the word *Ἐκκλησία*, *Cætus Vocatorum*) the whole company of the faithful, or those that are called to the knowledge, and belief, and profession of the truth: but then, as I have said, 'tis as certain, that the Church, thus considered, is invisible. For though the persons, who in their turns upon the stage of this world, have or do embrace the truth, who are baptized into, and live in the profession of it, though these may be actually seen, and known, and conversed with, and linked into one common and visible society; yet, take the Church in its aggregate sense, as the whole company of those that have, or do, or shall thus profess, and so it must needs be invisible, unless to that eye only that can see all things, *uno actu et intuitu*, by one act and view.

That therefore in which this part of the controversy is concerned, is the Church indeed, but it is that part of the Church only which we express by the Church militant. And it is the Cardinal's own title, when he enters upon this dispute; *De Ecclesia militante*; that is, that part of the Church that is conversant in this world, that have embraced the faith of the Gospel, that have taken up the profession of it, and do maintain this profession in the use of the holy rites and sacraments which Christ hath instituted and commanded to be observed. And here one would think, that the question between us should be, whether the visibility of the Church, as thus considered, is not so firmly assured to us in the holy Scriptures, as that there

\* Bell. de Eccles. Milit. l. iii. c. 1. [De Controv. vol. 2. p. 105. Par. 1608.]

neither hath been, nor ever will be any one part of time or age, wherein there shall not be a visible society of men professing the true faith, and maintaining the true religion in doctrine and worship, as it hath been taught and established by Christ and his Apostles; or, whether it is possible for the Church, in any the least space of time, from its rise and beginning, to the end and consummation of the world, wholly and entirely to fail? But this is not the question; though the Papists would sometimes in their arguings seem to make it so: and some Protestants (at least as to any public or visible profession of the truth) have seemed to own and maintain that there hath been, or may be such an entire defection of the Church, as that it may have been universally fallen off as to some of the very fundamentals in Christianity.

As to this, taking the question in its due latitude, there is really no controversy betwixt the Church of Rome and us. For as the Romanists will not content themselves with some little reserved number of men professing the truth, that that should go under the style or nomination of the Church; so the Protestants, on the other side, however some in the warmth of dispute, or the bias of contradiction, may have given themselves too great a liberty in asserting the defectibility of the Church; yet in their sober reasonings, there are none possibly of the writers, nor indeed of the whole Reformed communion, that rightly understand what they say, or whereof they affirm, but do so securely depend upon the truth and faithfulness of Christ's blessed promises to his Church, as to assure themselves, that there always were, and always will be, a visible part of mankind that shall profess his truth. Visible, I say, not perhaps in any glorious splendour, or with external pomp or observation; Christ himself never designed to make that an inseparable note of his Church, as appears when he tells us, "that the kingdom of God cometh not with observation;"\* but visible so, as that it may be apparently discerned by those that will not shut their eyes, even by such as (if I may so express it) are themselves without, and much more by those who are of the same faith and communion. This, indeed, those places in the Scripture give us just ground to hope and believe, that tell us, that upon that confession St. Peter had made "Christ would build his Church, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it;"† that he "would be with them to the

\* Luke xvii. 20.

† Matth. xvi. 18.

end of the world.”\* And “that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them.”† It is so small a number as two or three will make a “gathering together,” and that smallest collection of men, is Christ ready to own as his Church, by “being in the midst of them.” The Church is therefore called “the pillar and ground of truth.”‡ And the Apostle tells us, “the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.”§

Herein, I say, we may be supposed to agree with our adversaries, that the Church, generally speaking, neither ever did, nor ever will, as to the fundamentals of Christianity, totally and entirely fail, but in one part of the world or other, will in every age maintain even its visibility to the end and consummation of all things. When the Arian heresy had so far prevailed that it became proverbial, “*Athanasius contra Mundum, et Mundus contra Athanasium*: Athanasius against the world, and the world against Athanasius:” it is true, so far as that heresy prevailed, there was an absolute defection in some of the essentials of a Christian Church, and that defection was of vast extent, and looked something like universal, when they had gained over to themselves the secular power to encourage and cover them: but yet, even then all Church histories agree in considerable numbers of Bishops and Fathers, and their Churches, who were contemporary with Athanasius, and maintained the orthodox faith with all clearness and stedfastness, against all the subtilty or cruelty of their enemies. So I may add as to the Church of Rome, it is not to be denied but the very fundamentals of Christianity, as they are summed up in that which we call the Apostles and the Nicene Creed, are still kept up and professed, and have always so been, though miserably blended with many impious and impure both doctrines and usages, which for some hundreds of years have been creeping in, and are now in their full height, being of that quality, that though they do not directly and immediately cut them off from all title to a Christian Church, yet, *ex consequenti*, mediately and by necessary consequence, they seem to strike at and overthrow the foundation of faith, and that so far, that it absolutely binds and obliges all persons that know and are aware of it, upon pain of damnation, to separate from her, in such faith and such practices. Such, for instance, as their doctrines of merits, transubstantiation, sacrifice of the mass, praying to

\* Matth. xxviii. 20.

† 1 Tim. iii. 15.

† Matth. xviii. [20.]

§ 2 Tim. ii. 19.



saints and angels, the worshipping of images, the obscurity of the Scriptures, purgatory, with some others. And yet, even as to this part of that Church's apostasy, were it not something foreign to the design of these papers, it might be fairly enough made out, that in all ages, by the confession of their own several writers and historians, there have still appeared, sometimes whole communities of people, and other times particular persons of famed learning, remarkable piety, and strong interest in the world, who have either noted and complained of, or openly opposed and resisted, at least dissented and kept themselves free from the errors, corruptions, and superstitions, as they sprung and grew up in the times wherein they lived.

This, therefore, is not the question really betwixt the Church of Rome and us, Whether the Church may in any age so entirely fail, as to become no where visible? But that which is plainly in dispute, and that which our adversaries would pretend under this head of the Visibility of the Church to prove, from the many texts of Scripture which they allege, is this, viz. That it is necessary, from the prophecies in the Old Testament, and the promises that Christ and his Apostles have left with us in the New Testament, that the Church should in all ages appear in its just splendour, diffusiveness, succession, and regulated form, in the visible profession of its faith, and uniform use of its sacraments, under its stated governors and pastors, subordinate to one monarch or head of the Church thus constituted. And that the Church of Rome hath throughout all ages appeared thus visible, and was that Church thus pointed out by prophecies of old, secured by infallible promises, and could *digito monstrari*, be always shewn and viewed in its succession, in its numbers, and in its visible head and monarch under Christ, whose vicar he is, viz. the Pope or Bishop of Rome. That this, and no other, is the state of the question, may be made out from all or most of the Romish writers, both from the definitions they give of their Church, the drift of their arguments, and the scorn they generally throw upon the Reformed Church, charging it with novelty, slenderness of number, weakness of interest, and want of succession. I shall pitch upon Bellarmine, and observe it from the definition he gives us of the Church, when he is setting himself to argue its Visibility, from Scriptures, reason, and the Fathers. His definition is this, "It is a company of men knit together in the profession of the same faith, the communion of the same sacraments, and under

the government of lawful pastors, especially of that one Vicar of Christ upon the earth, the Bishop of Rome.”\*

This is his definition, and this we are to suppose he sticks to in all the proofs that himself, or indeed after him the Catholic Scripturist, and the author of the “Touchstone of the Reformed Gospel,” do allege to justify it. So that he and they make the Church of Rome, as comprehended in its numerous communion, and as governed under its splendid and glorious head and monarch, the Bishop of Rome, to be “the one and true Church,” and wholly the subject of those texts which they cite, either from the prophets of old, or from the New Testament. In considering of which, it will not be amiss to shew—

I. That it is not the style or usual manner of the Scriptures, in describing the Church, especially in the books of the New Testament, to insist much upon the numbers, or the outward pomp and splendour of the Church, but rather to the contrary.

II. That none of those places of Scripture, which either the Cardinal, or the Touchstone of the Reformed Gospel, or the Catholic Scripturist have cited, do prove any thing of the Visibility of the Church, as supposed (in Bellarmine’s definition) under the government of one visible head, Christ’s Vicar upon earth, the Bishop of Rome.

I. The first I shall touch at but briefly, viz. That it is not in the style or usual manner of the Scriptures, especially of the books of the New Testament, in describing the Church, to insist much upon the numbers, or outward pomp and splendour of the Church, but rather to the contrary. I confess, many of the prophecies in the Old Testament, and those particularly which the Catholic Scripturist† hath mustered up in such plenty, do speak of glorious things that should in time befall the Church; but these (as shall be shewn in their proper place) are generally to be understood of the vast diffusiveness of the Gospel, that it should run through all nations, should shine into the darkest and most distant corners of the world: or else

\* *Nostra autem sententia est, Ecclesiam unam tantum esse et non duas, et illam unam et veram, esse cætum hominum ejusdem Christianæ Fidei Professione, et eorundem Sacramentorum Communionem colligatum, sub Regimine legitimorum Pastorum, ac præcipue Unius Christi in terris Vicarii Romani Pontificis.* Bell. de Eccles. Milit. lib. 3. cap. 2. [De Controv. vol. 2. col. 108.]

† Cath. Script. 3d Point.

they respect the spiritual, and not the carnal or temporal estate of the Church; or else they are restrained, some of them, merely to the recovery of the Jewish state from its captivity, towards whom such kind of expressions were proper, and accommodate to their economy; or, in a word, may point at the last upshot and consummation of the Church. Otherwise, in almost all the passages that concern the Church in the books of the New Testament, she is generally described in another kind of style. Our Saviour calls them by the name of a "little flock."\* He discourseth them continually under the supposal of persecution and poverty, great hardships of life, perfect scorn and contempt in this world, &c. He never so much as hints to St. Peter the grandeur of his successor, the riches of his see, the extent of his dominion, his supremacy over kings and emperors, or the uncontrollable interest he should have with so many states and principalities in the world. But when the Apostles were contesting a little superiority among themselves, he checks the dispute as fond, and foreign to their character; he reproaches them for affecting what might become only the heathen potentates and great ones in the world, who were then making power and extent of government their main design and endeavour. "He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them;—But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."† Nay, the Apostle St. Paul speaks of himself, and those who in common with him bore the mighty character of Apostles, and first publishers of the Gospel, that they are "made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things unto this day." We are told indeed of the falling away of the Church in a great part of it, and that part of the apostasy is, I confess, set forth to us in some splendour, when "the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped:"‡ so "that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." This text of Scripture, if they please to accept of it, we heartily allow them for the proof of their Church, and its visibility for many ages.

But to proceed: we find in the Book of the Revelation of St. John, a book wherein the Romanists themselves will ac-

\* Luke xii. 32.

† Luke xxii. 24, 25, 26.

‡ 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.

knowledge that some great revolutions of the Church are determinately set down; there the Church is represented under the character of a woman flying into the wilderness,\* fed and maintained there by the providence of God. It is true, she is described in terms that proclaim her great and illustrious enough. "She is clothed with the sun, she hath the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."† But all this points plainly at her spiritual state; and as she is supposed to be elevated above this world and all sublunary things: whereas the apostatized part of mankind, set up in opposition to the true Church, is described under the character of a woman too, but in a very gaudy dress: "She is arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand," &c.‡ All which intimates to us the secular grandeur by which that apostatized party, that were in direct opposition to the true Church, should make themselves so notorious and remarkable.

And so all along throughout the whole book, we may observe the true Church (unless in her last consummation, when she appears adorned as becomes the owned and acknowledged bride of the holy Jesus), her circumstances are generally represented as very low and discouraged, trampled on, and triumphed over, prophesying in sackcloth, made merry upon amongst her successful enemies, bearing still the afflictive and tragical part throughout every scene; a thing which those of the Church of Rome themselves seem so convinced of, that some of their writers, in the descriptions they make of that Antichrist whom they have feigned and imagined, tell us\$—"That in the reign of Antichrist, the external state of the Roman Church, and public intercourse of the faithful with the same, shall cease, and that there shall be only a communion in heart with it, and practice in secret:" so the Rhemists confess. And Suarez declares,|| *Diebus Antichristi, omnem cultum divinum cessaturum*; that "in the days of Antichrist, all divine worship should cease." Here one might by the way put in a remembering question, viz. Where then will our adversaries place the Visibility of the Church? But—

II. Come we to consider, that none of those places of Scrip-

\* Rev. xii. 6.

† Ib. ver. 1.

‡ Rev. xvii. 4.

§ Vid. Rhem. Annotat. in 2 Thess. ii. sect. 10.

|| Vid. Suarez. tom. ii. qu. 59. art. 6. sect. 6.



ture, which either the Cardinal or the Touchstone of the Reformed Gospel, or the Catholic Scripturist, have cited, do prove anything of the Visibility of the Church, as defined by Bellarmine, viz. "a company of men—knit together under the government of Christ's Vicar on earth, the Bishop of Rome."

And here, before I set myself to examine the Scriptures by which the Cardinal pretends to confirm or illustrate this argument, I must beg the reader's pardon, that I so much as mention most of them, because they are so very impertinent to the purpose for which he quoted them, that were not his writings everywhere in the hands of the learned, it would seem impossible to persuade those that could not consult them that ever so great a disputant as Bellarmine, on so public a stage of learning, wherein his writings, both in his own and future ages, must be conversant, should so extravagantly trifle, in first pretending so solemnly to the Scriptures, and then pitching upon such passages, that one would think a man in jest while he is propounding them.

He tells us first,\* he can prove it from all those Scriptures where the Church is so much as named. "For," saith he, "wherever we meet with the name of Church, there a visible congregation must always be understood;" upon this he quotes Numbers xx. 4. "Why have ye brought up *Ecclesiam Domini*, the congregation of the Lord, into this wilderness?" "Here," saith the Cardinal gravely, "that most known and noted people of Israel is called the Church, or congregation of the Lord." This is strict reasoning indeed! The people of Israel were many in number, and visible enough at that time, to every eye that then had the good fortune to meet or converse with them, and this visible company of the Israelites are here called *Ecclesia Domini*, the congregation of the Lord; therefore the Church is always visible to the world's end, under the government of one visible Head, the Bishop of Rome. He follows this mighty blow of his with another irrefragable text,† wherein he tells us the Scripture expressly speaks of the visible Church, 1 Kings viii. 14. "The king turned his face about, and blessed *omni ecclesiæ Israel*, all the congregation of Israel, and all the congregation of Israel stood." Now, had we been so lucky in our translation as to have rendered it the

\* Bell. de Eccles. Mil. lib. 3. cap. 12. [vol. 2. col. 142. Paris. 1608.]

† Vid. Bell. ubi supra.

Church of Israel, as the Vulgar hath it, *Ecclesia Israel*, we should long before this time have been convinced, that God had a visible Church then, and not have been so hardy as to have ventured the lists with the Romanists about their visible Church now. But this it is to out-face an argument through our mere ignorance of a Latin word.

His next citation from Scripture is that of Matth. xvi. 18.\* “Upon this rock will I build my Church.” A place which the Catholic Scripturist mentions indeed, but tells us he will not insist on it. Whether he was convinced it was nothing to the purpose? or, whether he thought it a text so plain and cogent, that it would be but holding a candle to the sun, to enlarge much upon it? As he hath not thought fit to tell us, so we dismiss him. The Cardinal however spends his remarks upon it, and gives his adversary pretty good scope too; he finds he can play with him here, and yet take him at last; for he tells us, “Whether by this rock† we understand Christ, or the confession of his faith, as the heretics would have it? Or, whether by this rock we understand Peter, as the Roman Catholics do? Still the foundation of the Church is something sensible, and therefore the Church itself must be sensible too, or visible. For though we see neither Christ nor Peter at present, yet they were both of them at that time viewed by bodily eyes, and at this time are both seen in their vicar or successor.” I was willing to lay before the reader the whole weight of the argument, that he himself may judge how very unanswerably the Cardinal hath urged it. However, since he hath given us our choice to understand this rock of the confession that St. Peter then made, we will take it so, and then see how the argument will go. As to the understanding of St. Peter himself to be this rock, I need only refer the reader to the preceding treatises upon the subject of the Pope’s supremacy; and particularly that that sets itself to examine the texts by which the Papists pretend to prove it. And so proceed to consider, whether, if we take this rock to be the confession that Peter made of Christ, “that he was the Son of the living God,” and that Christ, upon this confession of his, promised that this should be the foundation upon which he would build his Church; whether from hence it must unquestionably follow, that the Church shall be always visible, under the known government of that one pastor, the Bishop of

\* Cath. Script. 3d Point, p. 41.

† Vid. Bell. ubi supra.

Rome, or Vicar of Christ? I grant that, could it be made out, that by this rock the person of Peter was immediately intended, and in his person the Pope was unavoidably included as his direct and perpetual successor, this text might carry some force in it, and Christ's promise that "the gates of hell should never prevail against it," might be made to speak something of an endless and unalterable succession secured to that See: but since none but the Romanists could ever so much as have dreamed of such an interpretation as this, and so many tracts have formerly and of late so strenuously vindicated this passage from so false a gloss, and the Cardinal hath said, though we should not understand it of the person of St. Peter, yet his argument holds good, let us consider it in the true sense it must and only must bear.

Our Lord having asked his disciples, what the world generally, and afterwards what they themselves thought of him, Simon Peter, usually the most forward in anything of this kind, makes a very plain and home confession, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God." Upon this, our Saviour, approving this hearty confession, tells Peter, with some allusion to his name, that this confession of his was the very rock or foundation "upon which he would build his Church;" that is, that whoever should hereafter heartily believe and profess Jesus to be the Son of God, *i. e.* the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, that every such person should be entitled to this relation with Christ; he should be esteemed a member of that society which should make up his Church. "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" that is, the belief and profession of this great truth should never hereafter be rooted out, but still there shall be always some in the world, who, notwithstanding all the opposition of hell itself, shall own and profess this faith.

This, in the event, hath hitherto been accomplished ever since it proceeded from our Saviour's mouth; and this we question not will for ever be. In every succession of ages there will still be some whom Christ shall own and acknowledge as his Church, from this fundamental confession of him. And thus far of the Church's Visibility, that is, that it shall never fail, but some numbers of persons shall still be known and distinguished as the followers of Christ; I have already said, is the undoubted promise of our Lord, and so believed and embraced by every good Protestant. And here let me further add, that as it may be made out, that there have not

wanted in all ages since the first depravation of the Church; some who still have borne their witness, and asserted the pure and unblended truth against the corruptions and superstitions of the Church of Rome itself, so upon the strength of this very promise we still depend, that there will never fail a generation of men that shall keep themselves unspotted from these "garments of the flesh," shall never drink of the "cup of Babylon's fornications," and shall keep the truths of God entire and inviolate, notwithstanding all the force, the frowns, the blood and destruction which the Church of Rome hath hitherto wrought, or is still meditating against any in this cause, by which she hath gained a considerable title to the "gates of hell" mentioned in the text. But how from hence should be collected, that there shall be always a splendid visible Church under the headship of that great monarch the Bishop of Rome, and that whoever are not under the government of this monarchy, or within the communion of this society, are to be supposed as not having made St. Peter's confession, that "Christ is the Son of the living God;" this, as the text doth not seem to point towards it, so the Cardinal hath not so much as attempted to make it out.

His next text is Matth. xviii. 17.\* "Tell it to the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church," &c. "Certainly," saith the Cardinal, "this could by no means be observed, were the Church invisible." "It were an hard case," saith the Touchstone,† "to be condemned as an heathen, for not telling or hearing a Church which hath so closely lain hid, that no man could hear, see, feel, nor understand it for a thousand years." The Catholic Scripturist‡ mentions this text, and enforceth it the same way. Here, if the question were asked, to whom did our Saviour then speak? it must be answered, to his disciples surely, to St. Peter probably, and the rest of the Apostles. Who then was the Church that they must tell the offence of their brother to? Was St. Peter at that time seated in his Pontifical throne, and had he his Consistory of Cardinals about him to receive the complaints and accusations of his subjects one against another? If not, then the Church might be invisible at that time, notwithstanding Christ's directions to tell the Church. The Touchstone§ puts the man into the condition of an heathen or a publican, if he do not tell as well as do not

\* Bellarm. [ut supra, 143.] † Touchstone Reform. Gosp. cap. 8. p. 22.

‡ Cath. Script. Point 3. p. 41.

§ Touchstone, ubi supra.



hear the Church ; that I have nothing to say to at this time, only perhaps he did not well understand the author he took it from.

Well ! but for once we will suppose, that this is a direction for the Church in future ages, when it should come to be formed and established in its just government. Then we must only suppose, that when there is such a Church, it must be applied to, and told ; not that there shall be always such a formed and visible Church. It is, we must all acknowledge, a most wholesome rule, that notorious and publicly scandalous offences should come under the cognizance of the Church, and the offender some way or other subjected to her censures. But then, this must be only when the Church is in that condition that makes her capable of throwing a just awe upon criminals, by the infliction of punishments tremendous and dreadful ; and nothing further is here supposed or commanded. Nor is it to be doubted, as I have already said, but that there will always be such a society of men, I mean, so much of the Church of Christ visible in all ages, wherein this rule may perpetually be of great use and influence, where any notorious and scandalous offence of its members may be so represented, as to meet with their due check by rebukes, instructions, excommunications, or otherwise, as the offender may need or deserve ; though I must also here add, that by experience it appears how much more effectual these methods have proved, when the Church is in the lowest and most persecuted state, and acts by its own more peculiar instruments of correction and discipline. And therefore, notwithstanding the rule, and the usefulness of this rule, there is nothing in it from whence can be picked out such a visible Church as Bellarmine defines. Much less is there in some following texts which he proceeds to cite, which I shall but name, as he himself hath done, with this remark only, that the Cardinal, in merely quoting them, seems very well assured in this his first head of arguing, that wherever the name of Church is, there also it is evidently visible, and under its requisite form of monarchical government, whose head is Christ's vicar upon earth. His texts are these : Acts xx. 28. " Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God," &c. " How," saith he, " can they feed the Church which they know nothing of?" Again, Acts. xv. 3. " Being brought on their way by the Church, they passed through Phœnice ;" ver. 4. " And when they were come to Jerusalem,

they were received of the Church." Acts xviii. 22. "When Paul had gone up and saluted the Church." Again, 1 Cor. xv. Gal. i. Phil. iii. St. Paul tells us of himself, "that he persecuted the Church." And bespeaks Timothy: "These things I write unto thee, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God;" 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15. These texts prove, as the Cardinal gravely observes, that Christ had a Church in being at the same time: so they do, and so may twenty more of that kind do, for any dispute we have with him in that matter.

From these proofs where the Church is named, the Cardinal proceeds to others where she is not named, but plainly described: thus, Psalm xviii. (to us Psalm xix.) "In sole posuit tabernaculum suum; He hath set his tabernacle in the sun:"\* so Vulg. hath it from the LXXII., but we render it, "In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun:" I will not contend which of them followeth the original the nearest. The argument the Psalmist is upon will bear either of them: for, speaking of the visible testimony that is given to the power and providence of God from the mighty fabric of the heavens, and that all nations in the world may see enough of God, in the frame, and order, and influences of those vast and glorious bodies, it may very well be said of God, "that he hath set his tabernacle in the sun," *i. e.* he hath made himself very visible in that glorious piece of his own workmanship, that whoever beholds that, may contemplate and adore the Divine power and goodness, who hath framed so goodly and so useful a body as that is. But if it be rendered as we have it in our translation, then it refers to the heavens, and the firmament, which, ver. 1, the Psalmist tells us, did every where declare the glory of God; they do it in all their several parts, but more especially and more conspicuously in the sun, for which the heavens are made a seat and tabernacle. And what then is this to the Visibility of the Church? Yes: doth not the Apostle, when he is upon the subject of the universal publication of the Gospel, make use of the words immediately foregoing? "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world," Rom. x. 18. What then! he does not even there cite this expression particularly, "He hath set his tabernacle in the sun:" or, if he did unquestionably refer to those words in the Psalmist which he seems to quote, it were not very absurd to suppose—

\* Vid. Bellarm. ubi supra.

(1.) The Apostle, upon the same argument with the Psalmist, that is, that all nations, both Jew and Gentile, had been already effectually preached to by the mighty works of the creation, which had been so long, so conspicuously, so universally seen, and might have been contemplated by all the rational world, "Their sound went into all the earth," &c.

But (2.) to allow this, that the Apostle is upon the extensive and universal promulgation of the Gospel, yet does he not seem to bring in this passage of the Psalmist as a proof, but allusively only, and by way of accommodation.

However (3. and lastly), suppose we to the utmost, that the words, as uttered by David, were prophetic, and they are brought in by the Apostle in proof of the fulfilling of this prophecy; yet all that could be made out thence, would be only that the Gospel was diffusively published, not only throughout all the region of Judea, but amongst the Gentiles too; which we readily grant, and have infinite reason to bless God for it, because the glad tidings have reached even our remotest isles too. And what is this still to the perpetual Visibility of the Church under the government of one great pastor and vicar of Christ, the Bishop of Rome?

Having mentioned this, that this last text cited by the Cardinal, if it be any way referred to by the Apostle, it must be understood of the vast publication of the Gospel, both in Judea and amongst the Gentiles: our due observation of this will cut short a great deal of work, and serve as one answer to a great heap of texts which the Catholic Scripturist hath fetched out of the Old Testament, in proof of his third point about the Visibility of the Church, and its continuance still, from one age to another, under lawful pastors.

We are to consider, that one great subject of the prophecies of old was not only the coming of the Messiah, but the consequence of that, viz. "breaking down the middle wall of partition," and enlarging the boundaries of the Church, which in the Prophet's time were kept within the pale of the Jewish nation, at least within the communion of their rights and usages, and the seal of their covenant. And this will appear a subject fit for the Prophets to have been very lofty and very large upon, if we consider:—

(1.) How prejudiced the Jews were in their conceptions about the eternal duration of their present economy, that it was never to be altered, much less abolished, for the bringing in of the Gentiles to so near affinity and relation with God.

Or if we consider, (2.) how mighty and signal an event and revolution of Providence this would be when it once came about. For the Christian religion to spread itself into so large a compass, to gain over to itself such vast empires and kingdoms, to break in with its light into the darkest, the most barbarous and uncultivated parts and corners of the world, to triumph over strongest oppositions, to level greatest mountains, to plain the roughest passages, to prevail upon the most prejudiced and opposite part of mankind, reducing them from the greatest ignorance of God and aversion to good, to the knowledge and love of God, and the practice of all virtue and true goodness, and this in places most distant from one another; and all from such small and inconsiderable beginnings, the appearance of one person in the world, who in his outward guise was poor and contemptible to a proverb, scorned and hated to the most cruel and ignominious death that could be thought of, and for the generality followed only by persons of the meanest figure and lowest education; a few poor and unlearned fishermen, whom he appointed the first publishers of his Gospel, and by whose means, notwithstanding, it became so diffused and universal. This was a subject worthy the noblest thoughts, and the most flaming expressions they could be delivered in by inspired Prophets, who accordingly enlarged and expatiated upon it, in great variety of phrase, which every where occurs in their writings.

Having thus prepared a just light to set those texts in, which the Catholic Scripturist, without any order or method, but in great number, hath huddled together in proof of his Roman Church, as now under the government of those whom he calls lawful pastors: having thus done, I say, I need give myself or the reader very little trouble in examining them further, than barely propounding them; in the reading of which, when rescued out of some of his uncouth and barbarous translations, every one may see how little to his purpose they are brought in by him.

Thus he quotes, Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant. Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne in all generations."\* This, he tells us, is verified in none but Christ, and hath rightly enough applied to it that passage of the angel, Luke i. 32, "The Lord God shall give him the

\* Cath. Script. Point 3. p. 31. [1687.]



throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Thus far we are satisfied, if the Scripturist be so too, we own it all, and let him make his best on it.

Then he tells us,\* that these promises are of that kind and nature that they cannot be made void or prevented, even by the sins of David's posterity; and for this he citeth several verses in the same psalm, from ver. 29 to ver. 38: "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments," &c. All which we own as most assuredly true, but still nothing to his purpose.

Of the same intent and meaning is that promise made by Nathan to David, quoted by the Scripturist, 2 Sam. vii. 16, primarily intended to assure David, that his posterity should inherit the throne after him, which Saul's did not. And, secondarily, that his kingdom should be everlasting in him who is Lord of all, and who should in time proceed from David's loins.

To the same purpose is that long passage out of Psal. lxxii. ver. 52, and so on, which with other quotations of the same and greater length, I shall take leave not to transcribe, because I would not swell the bulk of these papers too much, but refer the reader to their perusal himself, assuring him that though he will apprehend nothing in them to the purpose of this author's argument, yet he will not lose his labour, but meet with something therein that is very useful and comfortable.

So those many texts he cites from Isaiah's prophecy; they do indeed represent the care and faithfulness of God to his Church; the unchangeableness of his love, and his wise overruling all things for their protection, or for their seasonable deliverance in his own time: which, as they were originally designed for the support of the Jewish Church under her bondage, and the hardships of her captivity, giving her frequent assurances of restoration and deliverance in due time; so also, in some analogy, they have no doubt a prophetic respect to the Church under the dispensation of the Gospel, both as to its enlargement and diffusiveness amongst the Gentiles, as also its seasonable support, or vindication under all her oppressions, and the violences of her enemies. †Isa. xlix. 14, 15, 16; chap. liv. ver. 9, 10, 11, 12; chap. lx. 15, 18, 19,

\* Cath. Script. Point 3. p. 31. [1687.]

† Id. *ibid.*

20 ; chap. lxi. (the verse misprinted in the author) ver. 8, 9 ; chap. lxii. ver. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 12. All which, if the reader will consult, as they are rendered in our Bibles, or indeed as they are in the barbarous translation wherein this man hath quoted them, he will find (as I have said) some things very useful and very comfortable, and especially not unfit for that part of Christ's Church to converse with, who are at this present time under most severe and deplorable circumstances, through the merciless cruelty of those that would pretend themselves the only visible Church.

But this author's\* choicest remark is, upon his last quotation from Isa. lxvi. 21, where he tells us, is very clearly expressed, that the true Church shall have a perpetual succession of priests and Levites : "I will also take of them for priests and Levites, saith the Lord : for as the new heavens, and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." This prophecy, in all probability, did primarily concern a very particular instance of providence to the Jews, whom the Romans and Grecians in their Macedonian and Syrian wars finding in captivity, should restore them to their liberty, and send them back with honour into their own country : so the learned Grotius conjectures ; and then, that those who were of the priestly and Levitical order, under what state of servitude and drudgery soever they had lain hid and obscure in the time of their captivity, should be restored to the dignity and service of their office and function in their own country. But if (as in most of the prophecies of this kind we may reasonably conceive) the prophet points toward the state of the Church under the dispensation of the Gospel, it does indeed mean no less than that the Gospel should spread itself into the regions and countries beforementioned ; that it shall have its ministers to publish it, and that the Church, from one age to another, shall remain and have its being to the end of the world. This Calvin† himself owns in his commentaries upon the place, who yet is no friend to this author's, or Bellarmine's Visibility of the Church. Nor indeed is the emphasis to be laid upon the expression of priests and Levites, as our author would seem to do, to assert from thence the certain and visible succession of lawful pastors in the Church, particularly of that

\* Cath. Script. p. 36. [1687.]

† Vid. Calvin. in Loc. [Op. vol. 4. p. 480. col. 2. Genev. 1617.]

one pastor the Bishop of Rome. For, besides that the priestly and Levitical order under the Mosaic law, is not to be looked upon as typifying the episcopacy and ministry of the Christian Church, but of the Lord Jesus only, the great High-priest of our profession, who himself offered the only proper and propitiatory sacrifice that made all the other for ever cease: besides this, I say, where can the Church of Rome at this instant shew its succession, or pastoral authority and jurisdiction in any parts of Africa? I may add, of Greece either, which yet our author\* is so angry with our Bibles that they have avoided to translate the proper names of Tharshish, Pul, and Lud into.

His next transition is to the prophet Jeremy; and the first passage he remarks upon in him is pretty observable, both for the text itself and his own note upon it. The text is this, Jer. xxx. 2, "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure." In which words it is evident the Church may be scattered among nations that are her professed and victorious enemies, and consequently not in so "flourishing a condition upon the face of the earth," as he elsewhere expresseth it,† and contends for. And his own comment upon it in this place is, "that the Church indeed may be chastised for a while, but never brought to consummation." Which in the meaning of it is true, but the phrase of being brought to consummation, as he useth it, hath an elegancy in it very extraordinary, perhaps an original.

His next texts out of Jeremiah are of the same purport and design with those I have already noted from him out of Isaiah, viz. the glorious progress the Gospel should make, and its continuance against all opposition, that it should no more fail than the ordinances of heaven, the sun and moon, day and night. The texts are Jer. xxxi. ver. 35, 36, 37; chap. xxxii. 38, 39, 40; and again, chap. xxxiii. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. All which (as formerly) I refer to the reader's own perusal; only cannot without some indignation remark, that those expressions of the prophet, which cannot possibly belong to any other than the holy Jesus only, he blasphemously applieth them more than once to his pretended vicar the Pope. So upon Jer. xxxiii. 17, "David shall never want a man to sit upon the

\* Cath. Script. p. 37. [1687.] † Id. p. 34.

throne of the house of Israel;" he makes his remark in a parenthesis, "Christ must successively have his vicar, or vicerent in all ages."\* Again, where the prophet in the same chapter, ver. 21, expresseth it, "Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son" (a vicar, or vicerent, saith the author) "to reign upon his throne."

The texts out of Ezekiel are of the same kind: Ezek. xxxiv. 22, 23, 24; chap. xxxvii. 23, 24, 25, 26; chap. xlviii. 35. In all which there is nothing further remarkable, but that he still drives at that blasphemous thought, to make whatsoever is spoken by God of the glorious and endless reign of David his servant, that is, of Jesus, the Messiah, and Son of the living God, to seem primarily designed and fully accomplished in the Pope or head of the Roman Church. However, we Protestants have one invincible argument, that the letter of some of these texts which this man has cited, is not fulfilled in every age and in every part of the Christian Church; that particularly of Ezek. xxxvii. 23, "Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things," &c.† We know there are some parts of the world who call themselves the Church who do pollute themselves with idols; though we also believe and assure ourselves that there will come a time when this part of the prophecy, so far as it respects the Christian Church, shall be literally accomplished, that is, when all the wretched idolatry which as yet any where prevails, shall for ever cease; that time when "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations," shall be doomed to its fall and ruin; and when "those kings that have committed fornication with her," shall come "to hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire;" which we are assured by the Holy Ghost, will all in due time come to pass, Rev. xvii. 5, 16. Amen! even so, Lord Jesus. This author cites but one passage from Daniel, chap. ii. 44, which we also easily allow him may be interpreted of that kingdom, which Christ should set up in the times of his Gospel, but this is wholly spiritual, and refers to his mediatory administration.

And now, the Scripturist having so largely proved (as you may imagine) what he designed from those numerous texts in

\* Cath. Script. p. 38. [1687.]

† Ibid. p. 39.



the Old Testament, he thinks he hardly needs to offer at any from the New; only *ex abundantia*,\* is pleased to throw us in two or three from thence, which I shall briefly consider.

His first is that of 2 Cor. iv. 3, "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." This also the Touchstone† hath noted. The Apostle is indeed speaking here of the plain and perspicuous revelation of the Gospel, that they had preached it in all simplicity and plainness, without any of the arts which seducers were wont to gloss or cover their falsehoods with; and besides their preaching, they had asserted the truth of what they published with such miraculous powers derived upon them from above, that those who would not discern and embrace it, being thus plainly and convictively tendered, must be inexcusably blind, and perish through their own fatal obduracy. What is this to the visible constitution of the Church under the great head of all at Rome? Could any body but a priest of the Society of Jesus have smelt or suspected that the meaning of this text is, that whoever doth not see and acknowledge the Bishop of Rome to be the Vicar of Christ and Head of the Church, is lost and must perish? There may be something perhaps picked out from this passage that looks a little asquint at one darling opinion of the Romanists concerning the obscurity of the Scriptures, but nothing to their advantage as to this part of our controversy with them.

His next text is that which the Cardinal‡ cites too, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. "He gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, till we all come in the unity of the faith, &c." This place doubtless expresseth to us the unspeakable bounty and goodness of God in Christ Jesus, in supplying his Church with such variety of officers and ministers, who in the discharge of their several functions, should sufficiently publish and make known the Gospel, and should form and constitute the Church under some government, and that the ministry in the Church (at least in one or other of its characters) should continue till the Church had attained its perfected state in the other world. But what! will you say it is necessary that all these offices should continue, that the Church might not fail, or prove invisible? Where then are the offices of the Apostles, or prophets, or evangelists still vested? Either they were not necessary to the

\* Cath. Script. p. 40, 41.

† Touchstone, p. 22.

‡ Vid. Bellarm. de Eccles. Milit. lib. 3. cap. 13. [Ibid. col. 144.]

continuance (however they might be to laying the foundations) of the Church, or else the Church hath failed ever since those persons died off, for the character itself died with them. Or, are the Apostle, and prophet, and evangelist, all together centered in the Bishop or Pope of Rome? Is he an Apostle? Where was his immediate ordination by Christ? Is he a prophet? Where does he utter his predictions, and confirm them by miracles? Is he an evangelist? What regions and countries doth he travel into to publish the Gospel? I confess, if ever there had been any reason to have mentioned the Bishop of Rome as a necessary universal monarch, who must in all ages successively have continued visibly seated in his throne, to whom the whole Christian Church should be subordinate, here had been the opportunity the Apostle would have taken to have laid it before us. But since the Holy Spirit of God hath not thought fit, upon so fair an occasion, so much as to point toward it, the Cardinal, and those that work under him, might have had some modesty, and not ventured upon that for proof, which seems so directly against them.

The next quotations are made both by the Cardinal\* and the other two; Matth. v. 14, 15. The Apostles are "the light of the world, set upon candlesticks, not hid under a bushel, and a city set upon an hill." It is pity that hill which the city is set upon had not been seven hills, and then the proof had been invincible on Rome's side. We know where Rome is described, and to what purpose, by that very situation, which in time may make it sufficiently visible. But the plain and unaffected meaning of these texts is, that the Apostles, and first publishers of the Gospel, were persons which were to bring into the world a mighty light, which would make them very conspicuous and remarkable; and therefore they are cautioned, both as to their work, that they should not be slothful or negligent in discharging so great a trust; they should not hide the light that was put into their hands, for that very reason, that they might display it every where abroad. And then as to their behaviour, they are further cautioned, that that may be blameless and irreprovable; because, as a city on an hill, they were in the view of all men. Besides, I may add, similitudes make no proofs, much less do parables. Which may be an answer in short to the parable of the mustard-seed, urged

\* Bellarm. ubi supra. Cath. Script.

by the Scripturist ;\* and to Bellarmine's† parables of the floor, the net, the sheepfold, and the feast, &c.

They further quote that of Matth. xxviii. 20, "I will be with you to the end of the world." "The Apostles (saith Bellarmine, and after him the Scripturist‡) could not continue to the end of the world, and therefore he will be with them in the person of such as shall succeed them in teaching and preaching, &c." Our Lord certainly will be both with his Church, and with his ministers; he takes this character to himself, that "He walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and holdeth the seven stars in his right hand."§ Our adversaries shall not rob us of the comfort of this, and all the precious promises of this kind: we are hereby most infallibly assured of the care and inspection of Divine Providence over his Church, and all her faithful pastors and governors, even when they may seem to be reduced to the greatest extremities.

And here the Scripturist should have ended, but that he could not forbear one blasphemous suggestion, as if the Pope of Rome was intimated by that Paraclete, or Holy Spirit of God, which Christ promised should "come and abide in his Church;" for to no other purpose can he be supposed, by the series of his discourse, to have quoted that text, when he brings it in thus: "Again in the like sense he saith, John xiv. 16, And he will give another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever."|| That blessed Spirit of God, whom our Saviour promised immediately to the Apostles; whom he designed as his great Advocate in the world, as well as their Comforter (for so the word *Παράκλητος* may be doubly rendered), that is, should as well plead his cause, and "convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment," John xvi. 8, 9, 10, as inwardly support and instruct them in their greatest difficulties: that blessed Spirit, whom after his ascension he so visibly sent amongst them according to his promise, by which, even to them, he plainly demonstrated that he was a true Prophet, the Messiah, and "Son of the living God," Acts ii.: this Holy Spirit of God, and no other, was the immediate subject of this promise, and yet would this profane trifler insinuate amongst his negligent and ignorant readers, as if this were a text proper to prove the Bishop of Rome deputed by

\* Cath. Script. p. 41. [1687.]

† Bellar. de Eccles. Mil. lib. 3. c. 12. [Ibid. col. 143.]

‡ Cath. Script. p. 42. [1687.]

§ Rev. ii. 1.

|| Cath. Script. p. 42. [1687.]

Christ from one generation to another, to be his vicar and substitute.

And thus I have, as briefly as I could, examined all the texts that were worth any notice, and brought by the Romanists in proof of their doctrine of the Visibility of the Church. By which we may see with what sort of weapons they are most used to fight. For, would we but excuse them Scripture, reason, or real antiquity, at which we may observe them so very awkward, we may reasonably presume they have other kind of arguments with which they could more skilfully and with better success manage their cause.



# OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

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## TO THE READER.

READER,

THE design of this Tract is to furnish thee with answers to the many captious questions of the Romanists concerning the Church. Hence thou wilt be enabled to shew them where our religion was before Luther, and our Church before Henry VIII. Here thou wilt see the Church of England vindicated from novelty and schism; the Church of Rome condemned for usurpation and tyranny; that the traditions of that Church are spurious, and its infallibility not to be trusted; but that being in the communion of the Church of England, thou art in a safe bottom; and that having the Scripture for thy rule, thou hast a sure guide. I have made it short, that it might not be chargeable; and in the way of dialogue, that it might be easy. If thou reapest any benefit by it, bless God, and pray for the author. Farewell.

## CHAP. I.

A PLAIN AND FAMILIAR DISCOURSE BY WAY OF DIALOGUE BETWIXT A MINISTER AND HIS PARISHIONER, CONCERNING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

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### PART I.

SHEWING THE NATURE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

*Par.* SIR, I come to thank for your many useful discourses of late to your people, and especially for one of them.

*Min.* I endeavoured to make them as useful as I could, and I pray God they may be useful: but what is that one you mentioned?

*Par.* It was that concerning the Catholic Church: truly, I was very much pleased at it; and the rather, because the Romish Priests that are now very busy in practising upon the people, insist on this as their main artifice. What! will ye not believe the Church? Is there any salvation out of the Church? And the like.

*Min.* I am very glad you took so much notice of it, and I hope the rest of my hearers did so too; I heard as much as you tell me, concerning this sophistical device of theirs to corrupt our people, and I preached it on purpose to arm them against it.

*Par.* But that I should rob you too much of your time, I would beg the favour to discourse it a little over again with you; for I am pretty much abroad, and often happen into the company of Papists, and sometimes of priests, and the subject of discourse is usually, the Catholic Church: now I would be glad to be so furnished, as to be able to stand my ground against them.

*Min.* With all my heart; time cannot be better spent than in doing so good a work.

*Par.* If you please then, I'll propose the questions to you, as sometimes they propose them to me. And the first is, What is meant by the Catholic Church?

*Min.* Taking your question to be meant of the Church since Christ's coming in the flesh, without any respect to angels or good men before the Gospel (who are yet sometimes included in it), I thus describe it : The whole number of Christians in all ages and places, admitted into the Church by Baptism, and gathered into particular Churches under their respective pastors and bishops, united to one another, and to Christ their Head, by the profession of one faith or religion.

*Par.* Pray, Sir, let me desire you to take this description again asunder ; I perceive there are many things included in it ; and I desire to understand this point thoroughly.

*Min.* Agreed. Ask then any thing about it that you doubt of, and would be satisfied in.

*Par.* I would know first, Of what does the Catholic Church consist ?

*Min.* I have told you : the whole number of Christians in all ages and places ; every individual person that hath given up his name to Christ, and makes profession of his religion, is a member of this Church, and all of them together make up the Catholic Church, or the mystical body of Christ. " Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," says the Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 27. I might also tell you, that the word in the original used to express the Church by,\* properly signifies the whole number of persons belonging to any city or corporation assembled together.

*Par.* What is the rite or ceremony, whereby persons are initiated into the Church, and made members of it ?

*Min.* Baptism, or immersion into, or sprinkling with water ; so our Lord and Saviour ordained, Matth. xxviii. 19 : " Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

*Par.* Must not this body have a head, and one that is supreme in it ?

*Min.* I have expressed that also : it is the Lord Jesus ; " He," says the Apostle, Eph. v. 23, " is the Head of the Church, and Saviour of the body." He is the founder of this order ; he governs it by his laws, inspires it by his Spirit, protects it by his providence : " To him is committed all power in heaven and earth," Matth. xxviii. 18 ; by virtue whereof he hath constituted several officers and governors in his Church under him : but for one Vicar-general, or Lieutenant over the

\* 'Εκκλησία.



whole, there is not the least ground in Scripture, as I may have an occasion to shew you.

*Par.* You have prevented me the asking you that question, Whether Christ hath left a visible Head on earth? Yet I have one or two more questions about this matter to put to you. Pray, what is it makes the Catholic Church one?

*Min.* The profession of one Faith, or Christianity. But two things you must here remember: 1. By Faith or Christianity, I mean the whole institution or doctrine of Christ contained in the Holy Scriptures, especially those of the New Testament. And then, 2. That this Faith or religion must be publicly professed, which is best done by meeting together, and worshipping God according to the prescriptions Christ hath left us in his Gospel, one chief part whereof is, our frequent participation of the blessed Sacrament, which our Lord hath instituted as a federal rite of his Church, aptly representing both that near conjunction betwixt Christ and his Church, and that mutual fellowship of one Christian with another. So St. Paul speaks, 1 Cor. x. 17: "For we being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." It is this gave being to the Church, and on this depends its unity: to preserve the faith from corruption, is to preserve the Church from schisms; but to add to, or diminish from the faith, is to break and divide the Church.

*Par.* Why did you say in your description of the Church, That believers must be gathered into particular Churches, under their several pastors and bishops?

*Min.* For very good reason; because otherwise it might be a rout or multitude, but not a Church. As the profession of Christianity unites the several members to one another, and all to Christ their common Head; so, that there might be order and government amongst the members, and that the several acts of communion in the Church (whereby their profession of Christ's religion is chiefly manifested and maintained) might be duly performed, it is necessary that there should be officers to direct and oversee, and take care in the discharge of them. Hence, says the Apostle, Eph. iv. 11, "Christ gave in his Church, some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ:" and though these pastors and bishops are officers of the Church in general, and may on occasion advise and act for the good of the whole, and exercise their power and func-

tion in any part of it ; yet for the greater advantage and better edification of believers, it was necessary every bishop, and presbyter under his bishop, should be set his own bounds and limits ; what to be his particular charge, and where more especially to concern his care and conduct ; each of which charges within such a compass, are parts of the Catholic Church, as agreeing in the same faith, and making profession of it in the same acts of communion.

*Par.* But if bishops and pastors are the peculiar officers of Christ's Church, what place and power do you allow the supreme magistrate in this government ?

*Min.* Though kings and princes are not properly officers and governors of Christ's Church, as a Church, it being not a civil or secular, but a distinct spiritual society ; yet to them is to be given the external management of this society, a power to settle its outward policy, and to be the moderators and governors of it : upon this account the great Constantine styled himself a civil bishop,\* as being chiefly concerned in the guidance and direction of the outward affairs of the Church. The bishops and pastors of the Church have their ordination, and derive their commission from a higher power, even Christ ; but they act and exercise it under the protection of the supreme magistrate.

*Par.* You have very well cleared the description you gave of Christ's Catholic Church : pray give me leave to ask you, has not God promised that his Church should never fail on earth ?

*Min.* Yes ; and you have the promise in these words, Matth. xvi. 18, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it ;" and again, Christ speaking to his disciples, Matth. xxviii. 20, says, "I will be with you always to the end of the world."

*Par.* I suppose this promise is made to the universal Catholic Church, and not to any one part of it.

*Min.* It is so ; and therefore you may observe our Saviour speak indefinitely, "my Church," without naming any particular Church in this or that other country.

*Par.* But how far does this promise of our Saviour secure the Catholic Church from error and defection ?

*Min.* To be sure, from all fundamental errors ; for the Church can last no longer than that doctrine remains in it that gave a being to it : whatever error destroys that, destroys the

\* Ἐπίσκοπος τῶν ἔξω.

Church: and, therefore, our Saviour's promise must be supposed to preserve it free from all such errors.

*Par.* What then is the true meaning of the promise?

*Min.* It seems to be this: That there shall be always a Church in the world, in some place or other, professing the true faith of Christ, and living in the use of his holy institutions so long as the world shall last.

*Par.* The Catholic Church then may err in some lesser matters; I mean in points not fundamental, and yet remain the true Church of Christ; and so may any part of it, and yet be a true member of the whole.

*Min.* You say well: as a man may have many infirmities and wounds about him, and yet remain a true man: as a particular Christian may be guilty of many mistakes both in faith and practice, and yet be a true Christian, provided his mistakes destroy not the foundation of Christianity. Were there not at some time very great corruptions in the Jewish Church, even idolatry itself, and yet because they worshipped the true God, though others also, God did not wholly cast them off from being his people? Was there not faction and profaneness, and great mistakes in point of faith, concerning the resurrection, in the Church of Corinth, and yet St. Paul still acknowledged them to be a real and true Church? Were not the Seven Churches in Asia overrun with many errors and unchristian practices, and yet St. John writes to them by the Spirit, and in the name of Christ himself, as unto true Christian Churches?

*Par.* What was the Catholic Church? or where was it when Luther began his reformation?

*Min.* Were I not able to tell you where, it would be no weakening to our Saviour's promise: he might have a Church on earth, though not visible to us: for he has no where promised, that its number should always be great, or its condition prosperous: nay, the Apostle foretold, 2 Thess. ii. 3, that there should be a great defection, "and falling away." The Church has sometimes been forced to hide, sometimes to fly: sometimes you will find it privately in an upper room, sometimes skulking in caves and dens and in wildernesses; now besmeared with blood, then deformed with heresy; ceasing in one country, rising up in another; being more conspicuous, or obscure, as persecutions and heresies grew and prevailed in it.

*Par.* This discourse brings into my mind the sad complaint

of the prophet Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 10, "Lord," says he, "they have broken thy covenant, and destroyed thy altars and prophets, and I only am left alive, and they seek my life also." But God let him see how much he was mistaken, and though he knew it not, he had yet a small Church not infected with idolatry; ver. 18. "I have yet seven thousand knees that have not bowed to Baal." So may it happen, that Christ's Church may look small, and be obscure in her number, and yet I believe in all ages, there was in some part and corner of the world or other, a little flock; some few true Christians that profess the true faith, entire and without mixture, and they make up the Church of Christ.

*Min.* I am perfectly of your mind; and I think I am able to produce several instances to this purpose: amongst all the corruptions in the Romish Church, scarce was there one, but what, when it first appeared, was by one or other opposed and protested against. Have there not been many in that communion itself, that have openly complained of the degenerate state of their Church, and petitioned for a reformation? And we may reasonably presume there are many still, and would be thousands more, were they not frightened, and kept in awe by their unreasonable and unchristian severities. The Abigenses and Waldenses will ever be remembered, as so many confessors and martyrs for the truth, as well as instances of the Papal cruelty. Old Wickliffe, and his followers, were stout champions against the Romish superstitions in England; and poor Huss and his disciples, were no less brave and resolute against them in Germany and Bohemia.

*Par.* Indeed I have read of these; but the Romanists tell us, they were guilty of as great errors and lewd practices, if not worse, than we think those that we charge upon them.

*Min.* It is their common practice to blacken and load every person that sets up against them. I do not deny, but that some errors they might have; however, theirs they had not: and for those that are laid to their charge, some are not of any pernicious nature and consequence, and others wholly false, and fastened on them out of design by the malicious Romanists: such are their ungodly stories concerning the Waldenses, that they were the followers of the Manichees, owning two Gods, one the author and principle of good, the other of evil: that they denied Christ to be God; it may be, because they denied the bread in the sacrament to be Christ. But Reinerus and St. Bernard give a far different account of them.



*Par.* I should be glad, if you remember it, to hear what they say of them.

*Min.* I will repeat their testimony to the best of my remembrance. Reinerus thus speaks concerning them: "They continued so long as no sect hath: some say, it hath been since Silvester, some since the Apostles (there is universality of time); and there is almost no country wherein it spreadeth not (there is universality of place); they have a great show of piety, living uprightly before men, and believing all things aright concerning God, and all the Articles of the Creed:" their only fault was, as he adds, "they hate and blaspheme the Church of Rome."\* St. Bernard speaks of them much to the same purpose: "If you require an account of their faith, nothing is more Christian; if of their conversation, nothing more commendable; they frequent the Church, honour the priests, offer their gifts, make confessions, and communicate in the sacraments: they hurt none, circumvent none, are true and just in all their dealings, and perform what they promised:" all the crime he taxed them with was, "that they did not observe the monkish vow of continence."†

*Par.* What think you of all the particular national Churches in the world at the time of the Reformation? The Roman, Greek, Armenian, the Egyptian and Abyssinian Churches? Might they not all be parts of Christ's Church?

*Min.* Each of these had its errors and corruptions, it must be confessed, though not one depraved to that degree as the Roman: yet because she holds all the fundamental articles of faith, we, in charity, allow her to be a true Church, and so a part of the Catholic.

*Par.* Where was the Church of England then?

*Min.* She was included in the Roman Church, of which she was a member, and held in subjection by her.

*Par.* But you allow the Roman Church was a part of Christ's Catholic Church: why then did we separate from her?

*Min.* I said also she was a very corrupt Church, and we separated from her only in those things wherein she had separated from the catholic faith: so that though we went off from her, we went nearer and closer to the Catholic Church.

\* Illyr. Catal. Test. Verit. tom. 2. p. 543.

† Serm. 65. super Cant. Edit. Venet. An. 1575. tom. 1. p. 328.

*Par.* But what authority had the Church of England to reform herself, and to redress abuses?

*Min.* As she was a free independent Church, as well as the Roman: the Romish Church had indeed brought us into slavery and subjection, and by that means obtruded what doctrines and practices she pleased upon us; but the authority was usurped, and the imposition very gross, calculated on purpose to maintain their ill-gotten greatness and power; so that our Reformation chiefly consisted in throwing off the Roman yoke, and the spurious doctrines she had added to "the faith once delivered to the saints," which is the foundation of the Christian Church.

*Par.* I perceive then, had the Romish faith been sound and orthodox, the Church of England might have justly cast off her authority, being usurped, and asserted her own freedom, even as it is the duty and glory of a nation to depose an usurper, though his laws and government are never so excellent.

*Min.* You say right: she might have done so; and then how much more reason had she to do it, when both her faith and practices were so very unwholesome and dangerous to men's souls? And when the casting off the one, made way for the easier getting rid of the other?

*Par.* What are those corruptions in the Romish Church that make her communion so unsafe and hazardous?

*Min.* They are those twelve new articles of faith added in Pope Pius IV.'s Creed, transubstantiation, half-communion, purgatory, image-worship, invocation of saints, and the rest. You may meet with them all, and at the same time see them fully and excellently refuted in two little books come out lately, "Plausible Arguments of the Church of Rome confuted," and "Catechism," &c.

*Par.* But can two Churches of different communions be both parts of the one catholic Church? They and we have but little or no communion with one another, and yet I see you grant them both to be parts of Christ's catholic Church.

*Min.* Yes, we have still communion with her in part, though not in every part: we do not indeed hold communion with her as her subject and slave, nor in her corruptions and errors; but we still hold communion with her as a sister-Church, and so far as she holds the truth of Christ.

*Par.* But to what Church did we join ourselves when we left her?

*Min.* We neither left her, nor went to another, but remained as before, a part of Christ's catholic Church; only then we were a part of the catholic Church, as included in the Roman, and enslaved by her; and now a part of it still, as manumitted and at liberty; then a diseased and infected part, now a part recovered and restored to health.

*Par.* Sir, I thank you heartily; you have given me a very satisfactory account of the nature of the catholic Church, and of the reformation of ours: and I think I am now well prepared to answer that common question of the Romanists, "Where was your religion before Luther?"

*Min.* I believe you are; for it is no difficult matter to frame an answer to it from this discourse, *viz.* it was contained in the writings of Christ and his Apostles, professed in all Christian Churches in all ages; for some hundred of years, with great purity, and free from mixture; ever since, in most Churches more or less adulterated with dross and corruptions; but in no Church more than in the Roman, and the English, while in subjection to the Roman. So then before Luther, the religion we profess was in our own Church, though loaded and obscured with Romish errors and superstitions; and we have now no new religion, nor new Church, but the old religion, and the old Church reformed and restored to its first beauty and lustre.

*Par.* But is not the meaning of that question, Where was your religion, as it is now reformed, when Luther began his Reformation?

*Min.* In the first ages it was in Palestine and Greece, in Egypt, in Antioch, and in Rome itself, in Britain, and in all parts where the unwearied labours and incessant travels of the holy Apostles carried it: but as for that very time when Luther appeared, it may be that it was in the Greek, in the Abyssinian, and Egyptian Churches, amongst the Armenian Christians, who all dissent from most, if not all the Romish errors that our Reformed Church condemns: it may be it was in a corner, under a cloud, covered with rubbish. What if we say it was no where? Since Christ never promised, that his Church and religion should never be corrupted nor persecuted, but only that it should not fail, nor be destroyed.

*Par.* You have made it very clear and evident: I guess the Papists cannot give so good an account where their religion was before the Council of Trent; I mean as it is now constituted and determined.

*Min.* Well remembered ! It is a good way to turn the question upon them : for notwithstanding all their vaunts and brags of succession, antiquity, and the like, their additional articles of faith in Pope Pius's Creed are of a very late date, compared with the faith of the English Church as it is now reformed ; ours is the old religion, theirs innovation ; ours ancient, theirs in comparison but of yesterday ; they added many false doctrines to the Christian faith ; the true faith that was first, and from Christ and his Apostles, we keep ; the false doctrines that have been invented since, and added to it by the Trent Fathers, we have left.

*Par.* Pray, can you tell the precise time, and the particular persons and places, where, and when, and by whom those corruptions of theirs were forged ? I perceive they often ask that question, when we charge their religion with novel inventions.

*Min.* It is not very material whether we can or no, since we are sure, and can prove them to be gross corruptions, such as were never taught by Christ and his Apostles : the holy Scriptures are the charter of our corporation, they contain the laws of our society ; we embrace that faith the first Christians did ; are in the same bottom, and hope to be saved with them. Has Christ and his Apostles any where commanded or tolerated, nay, has he not forbidden image-worship, invocation of saints, prayers in an unknown tongue ? Is it any where said by them, That the Bishop of Rome shall be the supreme head of the Church on earth ? The infallible decider of controversies ? Have power to make new articles of faith, and as many as he pleases ? That penance is a sacrament ? That auricular confession is necessary to salvation ? If some of these are forbid, others not to be found in the sacred Scriptures, either Christ was an imperfect and fallible lawgiver, and his Apostles unfaithful and treacherous stewards of the mysteries of God, or else the Christian faith is whole and entire without them, and they forgeries and novelties invented by evil men, to serve the ends of ambition and covetousness.

*Par.* I confess this argument is sufficient (*viz.* that they are contrary to, or at least not to be found in the inspired writings) to prove them errors, were we not able to give an account of their original and progress : for an error may be an error, though no man knows the first author and propagator of it. The tares may be sowed in the night, and it may not be discerned when and who sowed them ; yet we may know that they are tares, and that it was an enemy too that did it : but



I think that our learned Protestant writers, have traced most of them back, even to the very time of their birth.

*Min.* They have so, and I will stay a little longer with you to gratify your curiosity with the discovery. The Pope obtained not the title of Universal Bishop till Boniface III.'s time, about six hundred years after Christ. Transubstantiation was not made an article of faith till the Council of Lateran, under Innocent III., in the year 1215. The doctrine of purgatory got not much footing and credit in the world till about 1140, and the Council of Trent first stamped it an article of faith. The doctrine of indulgences is a weed that grew up with that of purgatory, like ivy, twines about it, and lives upon it; but was not grown to any considerable height till Leo X.'s time, when Luther set up so strenuously against it. They boast of the second Council of Nice, to justify the antiquity of their image-worship; but we know the primitive Church abhorred it; some of the Fathers condemned not only the worshipping, but the very making of images. That it was not practised in the French Church till near 900, nor in Germany till after 1200 years. The Council of Constance, A.D. 1418, was the first that denied the cup to the laity, with an express 'notwithstanding' to the institution of Christ; and the Council of Florence, 1439, the first that fixed the number of the seven sacraments, and made it an article of faith. To name no more, the Pope's supremacy and infallibility were much opposed, never passed into a decree, till Leo X., in a packed Synod at Lateran, 1516, contrary to the decrees of Constance, Basil, Bourges, and Pisa, got it ordained, "That the Pope had authority over all Councils, and that it was necessary to salvation that all Christians should be subject to him." In sum, the Romish faith was not, as it is now, till the famous Council of Trent, which advanced many things into articles of faith, that before went only for the sentiments of particular doctors, and were believed or disbelieved at pleasure, but now must be believed as necessary to salvation.

*Par.* I have lately met with the Confession of Faith drawn up at the close of the Council of Trent, and confirmed by the bull of Pope Pius IV. A. D. 1564, and that indeed seems to speak the same thing.

*Min.* It does so: after reckoning up the articles contained in the ancient creeds, it recites the additional ones of that Council, and then obliges all to give an equal assent to them with the former, under pain of damnation.

*Par.* Sir, I am much engaged to you for this Christian entertainment, and the freedom you have permitted me to take with you ; I am satisfied that the catholic faith is always the same, and that that professed in our Church is that delivered by Christ and his Apostles, held always and in all places by the catholic Church ; and on the other hand, that that professed in the Roman Church is not to be found in the Scriptures, was not the faith of the ancient primitive Church, was ever and anon opposed by some or other of note, even in their own communion, and not settled as it is now, before the Trent Council : and therefore that ours is the catholic faith, and not theirs, and consequently our Church, with those that profess the same faith, the true catholic Church ; and that if theirs be allowed to be a part of it, it is for the sake of our faith which she owns and professes in common with us, and not for her own that she has added, and we condemn.

## PART II.

SHEWING THAT THE CHURCH OF ROME IS NOT THE ONE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CHRIST.

*Par.* SIR, the last time you gave me the freedom to discourse with you, you said, I remember, that the catholic Church of Christ was made up of all the particular Churches in the world ; pray how come the Romanists to say that their Church is the catholic Church ?

*Min.* Because they would have us believe that she is the mistress of all Churches, and that all ought to be in subjection to the Pope as supreme head on earth.

*Par.* That then is the meaning of some of their late authors when they say, that it is not the particular diocese or province of Rome that they call the catholic Church, but the Church of Rome and all that are joined in communion with her, and believe as she believes.

*Min.* Yes, it is so : but it is no hard matter to shew the weakness and falsehood of this assertion.

*Par.* Before you enter upon that, pray inform me, do not some of the Fathers call the Church of Rome the catholic Church ? The Papists tell us so in their writings.

*Min.* Yes, they do, and other Churches are called so as well as the Roman, and all by way of distinction from schismatical and heretical Churches : so we read of the catholic Church in Smyrna, and the catholic Church in Alexandria, and many others might be instanced in : it was the common appellation for every Church that held the true catholic faith ; that is, this is a catholic Church, and this Church, with the others that profess the same faith, is the one catholic Church.

*Par.* Why then the Roman Church, provided she held the true catholic faith, with all those in communion with her, and that believe as she believes, might be called the catholic Church.

*Min.* Yes, if by “all that believe as she believes” be limited only to those articles contained in Scripture, and summed up in the three creeds, separated from the many gross errors she has added to them, then the Church of Rome and all those others, are the catholic Church : but then this is no more than

what may be said of any Church as well as the Roman ; and the English catholic Church, with all that hold communion with her, is the one catholic Church of Christ on earth, as well as the Roman Catholic.

*Par.* I perceive you think they mean something more by “believing as she believes,” than the faith contained in the Scriptures.

*Min.* No doubt they do ; they mean those that acknowledge subjection to her, and believe all at large, what not only the Scriptures, but that Church, pretending to unscriptural traditions, declares to be articles of faith ; viz. those twelve of Pope Pius IV. ; and then the Church of Rome, with all that believe as she believes, is not the catholic Church, but very unsound and corrupt parts of it.

*Par.* Now, Sir, if you please, I’ll tell you what I have met with in their late authors, to prove the Pope to be supreme, and that the Church is called Catholic, by agreeing with that of Rome, and yielding subjection to him.

*Min.* Do so, and I will give you as plain an answer as I can to them.

*Par.* They say that Christ invested Peter with a paramount power and jurisdiction, not only above, but over all the rest of the Apostles ; and that the Pope derives it from him, as being his successor.

*Min.* This they say, but they cannot prove any thing of it, either that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome, or had such a power ; or if he was Bishop of Rome, and had such a power, that the Pope has an hereditary right to it.

*Par.* I have heard it indeed controverted whether St. Peter was ever bishop of Rome.

*Min.* The matter will bear very well a dispute ; for though St. Peter might be very instrumental in founding and building up that Church, yet it is not very likely he was formally a bishop of it, it being beneath the dignity of an Apostle, who as such was bishop of the whole catholic Church, to sit down for some considerable time bishop of one part of it : this is such another absurd degradation of him, as to say the Pope is rector of some little parish.

*Par.* But certainly they have some proof for what they affirm so confidently, and on which they lay so great a stress.

*Min.* Their chief proof is out of Eusebius’s Chronicle, where he relates that “St. Peter sat at Antioch seven years, after which he travelled to Rome, where he resided five and



twenty years." But this passage is suspected to be put in on design, it being left out in Jos. Scaliger's Greek edition;\* and indeed seems to be contradicted by Eusebius himself in his Ecclesiastical History,† where he tells us, "that St. Peter having preached the Gospel in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, &c. at the last, or at the end (that is), near the approach of his death, being at Rome, was put to death."

*Par.* I observed in your reciting the testimony out of Eusebius that St. Peter is said to be bishop of Antioch before he came to Rome: it should seem then, that if succession gives a right, the bishops of Antioch, where St. Peter was first bishop, have a better plea for the supremacy than the bishops of Rome.

*Min.* You have inferred right: but though both be granted that St. Peter was bishop of Rome, and succession conveys a right, yet neither signify any thing, unless St. Peter himself had such a power; for he could not derive upon them what he had not himself. Let me therefore hear the proofs you were mentioning the Romanists bring for St. Peter's supremacy of power and jurisdiction.

*Par.* The first and chiefest they urge is those words of our Saviour, Matth. xvi. 18, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." They make a great noise about this, and raise mighty triumphs upon it.

*Min.* I know they do; but as great a cry as they make, here is but little wool; and being conscious of the weakness of the argument, they would help it out with noise and confidence.

*Par.* But is not "on this rock" to be understood of St. Peter's person?

*Min.* It is very probable, no; for St. Peter, some while after these words spoken, denied his Master, and so for a time denied the faith; and now if the Church be built on him as the foundation, the foundation failing, the Church for that time must have failed too, contrary to what our Saviour promised that it should not.

*Par.* What then is the meaning of it?

*Min.* One or both of these two things: 1. St. Peter's faith: St. Peter having said before, verse 16, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God;" our Saviour answered, "Thou art

\* Lug. Bat. 1606.

† L. 3. c. 1. [p. 71. Par. 1659.]

Peter, and on this rock (on this faith thou hast now made profession of) I will build my Church.”\* 2. What our Saviour here said of St. Peter might be said in the name of all the rest of the Apostles; as he made that confession of faith in the name of them all,† so this honourable character might be conferred on him in the name of all too; and this seems the more probable, because the same thing, in a manner, is in other places said in common of all of them.‡

*Par.* Yet it should seem, that something peculiar is in these words conferred on St. Peter: in the foregoing words, St. Peter’s forwardness and zeal to confess Christ, appeared above the rest: “St. Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ,” &c. And therefore why should not some particular badge of honour be meant in these words, to be fixed on him as the reward of it?

*Min.* It may be there is; and if any thing, it may be this: that he should have the honour to be the first founder of the Christian Church, both amongst Jews and Gentiles: amongst the Jews, when at one sermon, Acts ii. 41, St. Peter being the first and chief speaker, no less than three thousand were converted to the faith of Christ: among the Gentiles, when he was commanded by God in a vision to repair to Cornelius, Acts x. 1, and to instruct him in the Christian doctrine, who was the first convert to the faith of Christ we read of amongst the Gentiles.

*Par.* You have fully satisfied me that there is no proof in this text for St. Peter’s supremacy, and consequently not for the Pope’s, if he be his successor. Will you give me leave to name another argument of their’s? They tell us, that St. Peter is always named first in the catalogue of the Apostles; and that first does not there signify first in the order of numbering: for then it would have followed, the second, and the third, as the other Apostles are named, but it does not: by first therefore it should seem, is meant, a primacy of power and jurisdiction.

*Min.* It is true, St. Peter is always set first in the Evangelists’ rolls of the Apostles; but he is not so in other places of Scripture, where we find sometimes James, sometimes Paul and Apollos, and sometimes Andrew, numbered before him. Gal. ii. 9. 1 Cor. iii. 22. John i. 45. But let it be granted,

\* Τῷ Πέτρῳ, τουτέστι, τῇ πίστει τῆς ὁμολογίας.

† Unus pro omnibus loquens, et Ecclesiæ voce respondens, Cyp. Ep. 55. [col. 179. Venet. 1728.]

‡ Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 19.

that for the most part he is named before the rest of the Apostles, all it can signify is this : that upon the account of the eminency of his faith, the fervour of his zeal in the cause of his Master, of his being first called to the Apostolical office, a primacy of order and honour is due to him ; and more than this, a primacy of power and jurisdiction it cannot signify, it being so plainly contrary to other Scriptures, and those innumerable.

*Par.* I was going to desire you, since their arguments for St. Peter's supremacy are so weak, to shew how strong our proofs are against it.

*Min.* To give you them briefly : we find our Saviour investing all the Apostles with equal powers, and deriving on all the same mission which he himself had received from God, John xx. 21 ; empowering all to preach, plant, and propagate the faith ; to feed and rule the flock of Christ, committing the same keys of the kingdom of heaven to one as well as another ; breathing the same Holy Ghost on all ; forbidding all ambitious attempts amongst them, who should be greatest ; promising indifferently to all twelve thrones to sit upon, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Matth. xix. 28. Does not St. Paul say, " Christ set in his Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets." He does not say, first St. Peter, but first Apostles ; all the Apostles were first. Was not St. Peter so far from challenging, much less exercising any such superiority over the Apostles, that we find him styling himself their fellow-presbyter, 1 Pet. v. 1, 2 ; and submitting to the orders of the Apostolic college ? Besides, are not St. James and St. John said in Scripture to be pillars, as well as St. Peter ? Are not the whole twelve Apostles equally styled the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem ? Does not St. Paul challenge an equality with the chiefest Apostles ? And did he not, on occasion, withstand St. Peter to the face, Gal. ii. 11, which he neither ought nor durst to have done, had he been his superior and lord ?

*Par.* The proof is clear and full beyond exception ; I see plainly the Pope cannot justify his supremacy by virtue of any right, as St. Peter's successor. But whence had he it then ? How came his Holiness to rise to this height of power and dominion ?

*Min.* The truth is, how large an empire soever his Holiness now claims over all other Churches, his authority, in the beginning, was no greater than that of his brother bishops ; the title was the same, and his Holiness lay in common to them all : a precedence indeed was given him, because he was bishop of the

imperial city ; addresses were made to him, because he was near the court and the royal presence ; appeals were brought him, because he was powerful, and as able to defend as to determine ; and that Church was often made the standard of the catholic faith, because for a time it continued pure and uncorrupt, whilst almost all others were overgrown with Arianism and other heresies. But of these honours that were given him, he made advantage to climb higher : from a priority of place, he soon challenged a superiority of power ; from being next to the Emperor, he aspired to be next to God ; from being an arbitrator, he set up for a judge ; and when he was grown so great that none durst control him, he would be an unerring judge, and grew infallible.

*Par.* These, I perceive, were the steps of the papal pride and empire : but I have been told, the Pope was beholden to that bloody regicide Phocas for the title of Universal Pastor.

*Min.* I shall shew you that presently ; but it will not be amiss here to inform you, that the Pope's challenging a supremacy of power over the whole Christian Church, is not only contrary to Scripture, but to the ancient canons of the Church.

*Par.* I have heard and read as much in some of our own authors ; but pray which are those canons ?

*Min.* They are chiefly four ; or, if you will, but one, four times repeated and confirmed in the first four General Councils succeeding one another.

*Par.* I shall be glad to hear them read in order, if you have them at hand.

*Min.* I can easily gratify you in this matter : the first is that famous one, the 6th canon of the first General Council of Nice, called by Constantine the Great, A. D. 325, which decreed that the Bishop of Alexandria shall have the same power within his province as the Bishop of Rome had in his. The words of the canon are these : " Let ancient customs still take place, those that are in Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, that the Bishop of Alexandria have power over all these, because such also is the custom of the Bishop of Rome."

*Par.* What do you infer from this canon ?

*Min.* I infer that which is obvious to every eye, viz. that the Bishop of Rome had not then an universal power over all Christian Churches, since the Bishop of Alexandria was to exercise the same jurisdiction in his own province as the Bishop of Rome did in his.

*Par.* You will be pleased to go on to recite the other canons you mentioned.



*Min.* The second is the third canon of the second General Council held at Constantinople, by the command of Theodosius the Emperor, A. D. 380 ; which decreed, “that the Bishop of Constantinople, upon the account of its being New Rome, or the seat of the empire, should have the privilege of honour next to the Bishop of Rome.”

*Par.* How does this canon make against the Pope’s supremacy?

*Min.* As it declares what kind of primacy the Bishop of Rome had above other bishops, and on what bottom it stood, viz. a primacy of honour, or the first place ; and because Rome, of which he was bishop, had been the imperial city. Now the Council decreed, that the Bishop of Constantinople should have the same honour next to him, and for the same reason ; because Constantinople was become New Rome, that is, the seat of the empire was removed thither.

*Par.* You have made this very plain to me : what is the third canon ?

*Min.* It is the eighth canon of the third General Council at Ephesus, A. D. 431. It runs thus : “Let the same course be observed in other dioceses, and in all provinces every where, that none of the holy bishops seize upon another province, which was not of old and from the beginning under his power.”

*Par.* This canon needs no exposition, it is so evident ; pray, what do the Romanists say to it ?

*Min.* Some of them deny it to be a canon of this Council, and (as they usually serve any thing that is against them) have endeavoured to strike it out from amongst the acts of it. Others say, it respected a particular case, the exemption of the Cyprian bishops from the encroachments of the Patriarch of Antioch, who pretended that it belonged to him to ordain their metropolitan. Now though this be granted, yet the decree passing in general words, without any reserve for the Bishop of Rome, must be supposed to conclude him, as well as any other, to be an ambitious usurper, if he claimed or exercised any jurisdiction over any church, that was not from the beginning under his power.

*Par.* This is so full to the purpose, that it may well be the last.

*Min.* Yet I told you there was a fourth : it is the 28th canon of the fourth General Council assembled at Chalcedon, A. D. 451 ; which ordained “that the Bishop of Constantinople should enjoy equal privileges with the Bishop of Rome ;” there

being the same reason for the one as the other, Constantinople then being the imperial seat, as Rome had been.

*Par.* I dare say the Romanists do not let this canon pass without some dirt thrown upon it.

*Min.* You are a notable guesser; some serve it as they do the forequoted canon of the General Council of Ephesus—leave it out of their editions of the Councils: others tell the world that this Council was not free, and the canon extorted by tumultuous importunity, whereas all the Fathers testified their owning of it by their subscriptions: others, that it is spurious, and put in clandestinely. But how then came the Pope's legates, who were present at the Council, so vehemently to oppose it? Had there been no such canon, there would have been no need of such an opposition. Others, that the Fathers at this Council offered the title of supreme and universal pastor to the Pope; and all because the persons delegated by the Pope to inform the Council against Dioscorus patriarch of Alexandria, do, in their accusation against him, presume to give their master that glorious title. All are calumnies to bespatter and bring into discredit a canon that lies so heavy upon them and their cause too.

*Par.* Truly these canons are very plain and manifest, and fully prove, not only the right of jurisdiction that every Church has over its own members, but withal that the Pope has no right of jurisdiction over all. But I think there is no need of such kind of proof, after so express and pregnant an one from Scripture against St. Peter's supremacy over the rest of the Apostles, on which chiefly the Pope's is grounded.

*Min.* It may be not; but the Church of England owning the four first General Councils, and often appealing to them, I was willing to let you see what they say as to this point. Other canons also there are very ancient, founded on the independent power every Church has over those in communion with her, forbidding appeals to be made to foreign and transmarine Churches; requiring that no person excluded the communion of one Church should be received by another: but these are enough.

*Par.* Now you are among the ancients, you may please to let me see what other proof there is in antiquity, that the bishops of Rome in the first ages had no such extravagant power and authority over the Church.

*Min.* I must do it briefly then: the bishops of Rome began very early to aspire after it, to discover their ambitious inclina-

tions that way ; but they were always withstood and censured for it by other bishops.

*Par.* Are there many instances of this nature ?

*Min.* Yes, too many ; I'll mention some few, and shall begin with that of Pope Victor, A. D. 196, who, because the Eastern bishops would not comply with the custom of the Church of Rome about the time of keeping Easter, rashly, and with a spirit savouring too much of pride and arrogance, threw them under the sentence of excommunication.

*Par.* It looks indeed like a very severe censure on so small an occasion.

*Min.* It was thought to be so then by all good men ; the whole Christian world was amazed at it, and many eminent persons, especially that meek and holy bishop Irenæus, sharply chid and rebuked him for it.

*Par.* This instance I have often met with in our own authors.

*Min.* I'll give you another : it was not long after this, when the Eastern Churches, and especially those in Afric, thought it necessary that persons baptized by heretics, should be baptized a-new ; Stephen, then bishop of Rome, was so highly displeased herewith, that he declared he would hold no communion with them, refused to see and speak with the bishops that were deputed to give him an account of their practice, and to shew their reasons for it ; fell foul on St. Cyprian bishop of Carthage, and Firmilian bishop of Cæsarea, and treated both with indecent language on this occasion.

*Par.* I wonder how these two eminent bishops resented this hard usage from their brother bishop ?

*Min.* Very grievously, as they had reason ; both censured him for it as done out of a proud and arrogant spirit ; and St. Cyprian afterwards calling an assembly of eighty-seven bishops to Carthage to debate this point, opened the synod with a notable speech,\* taxing the bishop of Rome with pride and ambition, shewing that no one ought to make himself Bishop of bishops ; that all bishops had equal power in their respective dioceses, and could no more be judged by others, than be themselves judges of others.

*Par.* I am glad to hear this account of St. Cyprian, because the Romish authors cite him very often on their side.

*Min.* I know they do ; and many other Fathers also, but

\* Syn. Carth. apud Cypr. p. 282. [col. 597. Venet. 1728.]

with what little reason I shall shew you presently : however, this has brought into my mind a saying or two more of St. Cyprian's to our purpose :\* "The other Apostles," says he, "were indeed that which Peter was, endowed with equal consortship of honour and power." Again : "Our Lord gave to all the Apostles after his resurrection an equal power, saying, As the Father sent me, so send I you."† To the same purpose St. Chrysostom :‡ "St. Paul sheweth," saith he, "that each Apostle did enjoy equal dignity : " and yet more clearly, when comparing St. Peter and St. Paul together,§ he makes St. Paul at least equal in honour to St. Peter.

*Par.* These two instances you have mentioned are very pat to the business ; but I have an imperfect remembrance in my head of some bishop that took upon himself the title of Universal Pastor, and the bishop of Rome called him the fore-runner of Antichrist for it ; would you please to give me an account of that story.

*Min.* I designed to have done it, had you not mentioned it, and it is this ; in the year 589, John bishop of Constantinople, that he might bear up the better against the growing greatness of the bishops of Rome, procured for himself in a synod convened in that city, about the cause of Gregory bishop of Antioch, the title of Œcumenical or Universal Bishop : but this was so passionately resented at Rome, that two bishops of that see, one after another, Pelagius and Gregory the Great, loaded the title with all the names of ignominy and reproach that could be invented ; and amongst others, styled it Devilish and Antichristian.

*Par.* It may be after all this, the bishop of Constantinople had no ill design in taking the title upon him.

*Min.* It does not appear that he had ; but as the Roman empire was then styled the Universe, or the whole world,|| and Constantinople the imperial seat, so were the bishops over the great Churches in that empire, and especially the bishop of Constantinople, the greatest of all, styled Universal Bishops ; so that it should seem the bishop of Constantinople took up that great title, only the better to correspond with the greatness of the city over which he was bishop.

\* Cypr. de Univ. Eccl. [Ibid. col. 397.]

† Chrys. in Gal. ii. 8. [Op. vol. 10. p. 811. Par. 1837.]

‡ In Gal. i. 8. [Ibid. p. 794.]

§ Greg. lib. vi. Ep. 30. [lib. vii. Ep. 33. vol. 2. col. 881. Par. 1705.]

|| Orbis Romanus. ἡ οἰκουμένη.



*Par.* Then the bishop of Constantinople took on him that title rather as a badge of honour, than any accession of power.

*Min.* Yes, surely; for had he designed an unlimited jurisdiction over the whole Church by it, it is not probable that the Eastern patriarchs and bishops, that were most of them at that synod, would have consented to it, and thereby at one cast have thrown away all their power.

*Par.* I have been told, it is no unusual thing in antiquity, for a particular bishop to have the title of Universal or Œcumenical Pastor bestowed upon him: what may be the reason of that?

*Min.* I shewed you this the last meeting we had, because every bishop is bishop of the catholic Church; and though for the more advantageous governing of it, each bishop has his part particularly to oversee, yet is he in some measure intrusted with the care of the whole; as the Church is but one, and the episcopal office one, each bishop has the whole episcopal power, and is bishop of the whole Church.

*Par.* But if this was all the bishop of Constantinople aimed at by that title, viz. greater honour and dignity; calling himself the Universal Bishop, as being bishop of the imperial city of the universe; what made the bishops of Rome so storm at it, as you said they did?

*Min.* Probably, as may be gathered from the aspiring temper of several of the bishops of that see, it was because they were out-done in their own way, they had been long driving at that title, and another stepped in before them, and run away with it.

*Par.* It was not then, I perceive, the title they so much quarrelled with, as the persons that wore it; had the bishops of Rome had it conferred on them by a synodical canon, it would have been but a very becoming and graceful title; but they being passed by, and others crowned with it, it must be proud and ungodly.

*Min.* I believe you have hit it; that, it is very likely, was the true reason of all their spleen and bitterness: the title of Universal Pastor was foul and abominable only till the bishops of Rome could get it set on their own heads; for, as much as Pope Gregory exclaimed against it, and condemned it in the bishop of Constantinople, his immediate successor but one, Pope Boniface III., got it taken from the see of Constantinople, and affixed it to his own of Rome.

*Par.* Here was a quick change indeed from one extreme to

the other; one Pope with all his might railed against it, another within twelve months with all his subtilty courted it: pray, how came Boniface by it?

*Min.* After the basest and vilest manner that can be thought of; it was by flattering and courting the most execrable Phocas, that most barbarous traitor and murderer, who, by imbruing his hands in the blood of his prince, and butchering his children before his eyes, possessed himself of his crown and dignity.

*Par.* Certainly, no Christian, much less a Christian bishop, can be supposed to fawn on such a monster of a man as this tyrant and usurper is represented to be.

*Min.* Yet no sooner was this abominable wretch in the throne, but Pope Gregory first, and then Boniface a little after (Sabinian, that was Pope betwixt, dying in half a year), soothed and complimented him at that rate, that one would have thought him to have been a Constantine or Antoninus.

*Par.* So then by flattering applications and wicked compliances, a grant of it was obtained from Phocas.

*Min.* Right: Phocas, won by the dextrous addresses and fawning insinuations of Boniface, puts out at last an edict, peremptorily requiring that the Church of Rome be styled and esteemed the Head of all Churches, and the Pope Universal Bishop.

*Par.* I perceive they got it basely, and by the favour of the basest of men: have their methods been any better to extend and enlarge their power and dominion?

*Min.* No, surely: the Eastern empire sinking apace by the successful invasions of the Saracens, and the Western much broken by the irruptions of the Lombards, the bishops of Rome, ever watchful to serve themselves of all occurrences, took the opportunity, while the Emperor's hands were full, to play a game for themselves; and what by the bounty of some princes, particularly of Pepin king of France, who gave them the lands his father Charles had won from the Lombards; and by the weakness and timorousness of others embroiled in foreign wars, or distracted with civil commotions, they have at last raised themselves to that height of power and authority, as to be able to lord it over God's heritage, and to give laws, a new faith, I had almost said a new Gospel, to the Christian world.

*Par.* Sir, I am very much engaged to you for this discourse; you have made it very plain, that the supremacy of power and jurisdiction the Pope claims over all other Churches, is illegal

and usurped. But though he has not a right of supremacy over all Churches, he may have over some; and they tell us his claim to the English Church is clear and unquestionable.

*Min.* Not so fast: the things they found their title on are chiefly these two; Archbishop Wilfred's appealing to Rome, A. D. 673, and being restored by the Pope's sentence; and Augustine the monk's coming over hither by the command of Gregory I. to convert the Saxons; neither of which can do them any service.

*Par.* I know nothing of Archbishop Wilfred's case.

*Min.* It was this in brief: he was a great pluralist, and had engrossed into his power so many benefices, that it became a scandal on religion: hereupon King Alfred orders him to quit some of them; but he refusing, appeals to the Pope; and though the Pope was very much his friend, and often writ in his favour, yet was he not restored, till by his submission and obedience to the king's orders, he had made himself capable of the king's favour. You may read this at large in Archbishop Bramball's "Just Vindication," c. 4. p. 6.

*Par.* Augustine the monk's story I am better acquainted with, and lately read it in the close of the Dean of St. Paul's "Origines Britannicæ."

*Min.* There indeed you have it at large, and having read it so lately, I need say the less of it. It is most certain, Christianity was planted in this island long before Augustine the monk set his foot upon it, and that was (as our historian Gildas informs us) about the latter end of Tiberius's reign; which some make to be five or six years before it was planted in Rome itself. Who was the first founder of the British Church, is not so certain: it is enough to our purpose that it continued here in the following ages, a free and an independent Church, governed under her own bishops, and subject to no foreign jurisdiction; having rites and usages of her own, differing from them of the Roman Church, both in the observation of Easter, the administration of baptism, and other particulars; a good argument that she had no dependence on Rome, nor owed any subjection to her.

*Par.* But was not religion at a low ebb when Augustine the monk came over? And did not he recover and settle it again?

*Min.* Yes, it was driven up by the Pagan Saxons (whom the Britons had called in to their assistance against the Picts and Scots) into a corner with the Britons into Wales; and he, as it appears, was very instrumental to convert the Saxons, and

restore the Gospel to those parts of the land where they most inhabited : but does this give him, or the bishop of Rome that sent him, a supremacy and jurisdiction over us ? Did the British bishops, seven in number, and the Christian monks that were found here, tamely submit their necks to the Roman yoke ? Nothing less, they unanimously and resolutely maintained the rights of their Church, withstood his usurpation, and would acknowledge no subjection but to their own primate and metropolitan.

*Par.* You have produced many canons and testimonies from the Fathers against the Pope's supremacy : I suppose you are not ignorant what boast they make of the Fathers and antiquity, as if they were all for it, and on their side : you have seen, I believe, three pamphlets that came out lately ; I think the titles of them are, "The Succession of the Church and Sacraments," "Consensus Veterum," by E. S., and "Nubes Testium."

*Min.* Yes, and I have seen all or most of them answered too before they came out ; and as for what concerns the point of supremacy we have been debating, you will find them fully confuted in two most excellent books, the Dean of St. Paul's "Rational Account," part ii. chap. 1. p. 300, 301, &c. and "Dr. Barrow's Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy." And it may be, somebody or other, that has time to spare, may think it worth their while to consider them over again.

*Par.* Truly there is no need of it : I have been told they are usually very tardy in their quotations ; that they oftentimes translate wrong, and mistake the sense, and in many of their books I perceive they give us the Greek Fathers in Latin : but as they have set them down, I do not see how they make much for their purpose.

*Min.* Do you perceive that ? I am, under due examination of them, of your opinion ; I cannot stay to give you a particular account of every testimony cited by them ; but, as far as I can discern, the whole force and strength of them altogether may be ranked and considered under a few general heads.

*Par.* I like the method very well ; and so in answering one, you answer many.

*Min.* The heads are these : 1. The great things said of St. Peter in the Scriptures and in the ancient Fathers. 2. The great things said of the Church of Rome and the bishops thereof. 3. Communion with the Church of Rome being



sometimes made the test of a catholic. 4. The frequent appeals made to that Church and the bishops thereof. 5. The antiquity and uninterrupted succession of that Church.

*Par.* I believe you have done them right ; these seem to contain the main of their strength, and I believe you are able to do them right too in the answering them.

*Min.* I must confess it is no hard matter for a man to confute a witness that is not against him ; for these are such. As for the 1st, the great things said of St. Peter in the Scriptures and the ancient Fathers, *viz.* where he is called the ambassador, steward or minister of Christ, a rock on which the Church is founded, where the keys of the Church are committed to him, and a power given him of binding and loosing, and where he is commanded to feed the flock ; where he is styled the head, the prince, the captain, the president of the Apostles : to this the answer is ready and full. The same things said of him in Scripture, 2 Cor. v. 20, Eph. ii. 20, Eph. iv. 11, are therein said also of all the Apostles ; and if not the same, yet as great things are said of the rest of the Apostles, by the ancients, as of him : after all, we yield that these magnificent titles denote something of honour peculiar to him, not a supremacy, but a primacy ; not an authority, but a precedence ; not a dominion, but a dignity.

*Par.* As to the 2nd : the great things spoken of the Church of Rome and the bishops thereof, *viz.* that she is the Apostolic See, the prerogatives of the Apostles' chair, the principal Church, and the more powerful principality, and the like, I will not trouble you for an answer, I have heard it often given, and I think it satisfactory.

*Min.* I suppose you mean, because Rome was the imperial seat ; and upon that account was that Church and the bishop of it, in power and riches and interest, in rank and splendour and dependences, much superior to all others.

*Par.* Yes, I mean that ; and for the same reason, when the seat of the empire was translated to Constantinople, did that see set up to vie with the Roman, and had an equality of honour conferred upon her.

*Min.* There may yet be another reason given of it, *viz.* because the Roman Church was founded by those two most eminent Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul (though neither the one nor the other, it may be, was formally bishop of it). Now out of love and honour to their memories, might the ancients speak so

many big and swelling things of the Church planted by them, and of its bishops.

*Par.* I had gotten over this stile pretty well without your help; but I think the 3rd particular is not so easy: pray, why was the faith of the Church of Rome made the test of catholicism, and communion with that Church, of catholics?

*Min.* Had you been never so little conversant in Church history, this would as little have puzzled you as the other: it was because the Church of Rome kept herself, for some considerable time longer, pure and untainted, whilst most of the Eastern Churches were more or less defiled with heresy: here was the true solid grain growing without the mixtures of Arian tares; and therefore to her did the Fathers, in their disputes with heretics and schismatics, frequently appeal, as a true catholic Church, that still held the true catholic faith; but because she was once a chaste and undefiled Church, does it follow that she must be always so? Most certainly the Church of Rome has been so changed and altered since, so diseased and deformed, that she cannot be known to be herself.

*Par.* It hink they laya great stress upon the 4th head, "The frequent appeals that have been made to that Church."

*Min.* They have little reason so to do; for all the appeals (till the after-encroachments and usurpations of that see) that were made to the Pope, were not as to a Governor set over all, who by his authority could command justice to be done (which the Fathers and St. Cyprian particularly so often and zealously declaim against), but as to a brother and a friend of innocence, that was most able to afford relief and succour to the injured and oppressed: they did not appeal to his bar to right them, but sued to his kindness to own them and their cause. Of so great power and interest was the bishop of that Church, by reason of his nearness to the Court, and his residence in that wealthy and populous city, that every one was ready to court him, and on every occasion to fly to his patronage, knowing well which side he took would go far to weigh down the balance: but at first, whenever he thought fit to interpose, it was in the nature of a friend, and not as a judge; by way of counsel and advice, and not of sentence and judgment.

*Par.* The last head you mentioned they cite the Fathers for, is the antiquity and uninterrupted succession of the Church of Rome; but I confess I am to seek how succession and antiquity can give supremacy.

*Min.* So am I too. It is true the ancients, in their disputes with schismatics, especially the Donatists, sometimes make use of this argument against them, that they were but as it were of yesterday, and could derive no succession from the Apostles; whereas the orthodox Churches were of long standing, and they could trace their bishops backward from one to another, till they came to the first founder and planter of them; and because the Church of Rome was, at the time of the Donatists, the most clear and uninterrupted in this point of succession, they were wont to instance in her particularly; but supposing the Church of Rome was now the only Church that could shew a succession (as she is not, for the Greek Church and the British Church can shew it as well as she), how does succession prove the Pope's supremacy? Or the want of it prove a Church no Church? May not a man be acknowledged to be a true son of Adam, though he cannot name all his progenitors that came betwixt?

*Par.* It may be it is, because that Church is yet in being, and God has promised that his Church shall never fail.

*Min.* But because she is not yet destroyed, does it follow she never shall be? It is an evident demonstration indeed of the wonderful patience and forbearance of God towards a very degenerate and depraved Church, but can be no argument for the goodness of a Church, or for the perpetual duration of it.

*Par.* Sir, I think you have omitted one thing which they plead, and then I shall ease you of your trouble: some of the Fathers, St. Cyprian especially, style the See of Rome "the chair of St. Peter," and tell us, "that that chair is but one, and from it sprang the unity of the priesthood:" how are these expressions to be understood?

*Min.* I thank you for putting me in mind of it; they are Optatus's words as well as St. Cyprian's;\* and the true sense of them is this: that as the episcopal office is but one, and the whole power of it put into the hands of every bishop; so each Church had but one bishop, or one episcopal chair, the better to preserve unity, and this was the original or fountain of priesthood to all the clergy within its jurisdiction; such was Rome the one chair of St. Peter, though that Church was founded by St. Paul also; yet for unity sake, only one episcopal chair was set up, and one episcopal succession preserved,

\* Opt. Mil. lib. 2. adv. Parm. Cyp. Ep. 55. ad Cornel.

and from it the unity of the priesthood was derived into all parts within that see or patriarchate.

*Par.* I perceive you limit those words, "from whence the unity of the priesthood first began," to those places within the bishop of Rome's jurisdiction.

*Min.* Polydore Virgil\* does so; "for," says he, "it is very clear that orderly priesthood was appointed at Jerusalem long before St. Peter came to Rome." The younger sister may have the better fortune, become the more honourable, and take place of the elder, but she cannot make herself born first, and of the longest standing. There being Churches completely formed before the Roman was in being, she could not be the original of priesthood to them; but by many accidental advantages growing the greatest and richest Church, she became the first too; and this primacy of honour and dignity was at that time, and for that reason, readily yielded to her by the elder Churches. So that the priesthood which is but one, may be said to begin first at Rome, for the same reason that the Roman is called the first Church, in regard of the dignity of it, as being the principal member of Christ's Church catholic: but yet there may be a first amongst equals, and a man may be above thousands in honour and dignity, over whom he has no absolute command or power.

\* Lib. 4. de Invent. Rerum.



## PART III.

SHEWING THAT THE SCRIPTURES, AND NOT THE CHURCH,  
ARE THE RULE OF FAITH.

*Par.* SIR, I think your discourse the other day made it very plain, that the Church of Rome is not the Catholic Church. Pray what Church do the Romanists mean, when they say “that the Church is the Rule of Faith?”

*Min.* They mean their own particular Church, and call it the Catholic: but you have heard upon what grounds we deny it, and I am glad they appeared clear and convincing to you.

*Par.* I fancy, if you will not allow their Church to be the catholic Church, their zeal will not be so hot for the Church’s being “the unerring oracle of truth,” and “infallible decider of controversies.”

*Min.* I am of your mind; for in my conscience, the holy catholic Church in all ages, especially in the first, that were nearest the fountain of truth, and so could best discern truth from falsehood, never held the same faith and doctrine that the Church of Rome does now.

*Par.* But taking the Church to be meant of the “true catholic Church of Christ,” is she to be admitted to be the Rule of Faith?

*Min.* No; we have, as we ought, a very great veneration for her, and pay all due deference to her judgment, and are confirmed in the faith by the testimony and witness she bears to it: but the Rule she judged by, was the doctrine of Christ by God’s appointment committed to writing, and that must be ours: and if not the catholic Church, much less the Church of Rome, which I have shewn is but one part of it, and that a very corrupt part too.

*Par.* But this being the foundation on which the whole fabric of their religion is built, methinks they should be able to say a great deal for it.

*Min.* What that is I shall endeavour to shew you, and at the same time shew you the weakness of it; but before we enter upon that, it will not be amiss that we fix the terms of the question.

*Par.* If you please; but I think there is no great difficulty in that: by Faith, I suppose, is meant the belief of the whole

Christian doctrine revealed by Christ to his Apostles, and by them delivered to us: and by Rule, that thing whereby we know what is the Christian doctrine, and what is not.

*Min.* You have expressed it well enough: now this Rule, the Reformed say, is the Scriptures only; the Romanists, the Church.

*Par.* How may the Scriptures be proved to be the complete and only Rule of Faith?

*Min.* Indeed it is so plain, it needs no proof; and I am sure you have no doubt of it. It is manifest from their own testimony, and there are many collateral proofs besides. What did the primitive Christians preserve with more care than these Divine writings? What did their persecutors more industriously seek to destroy than the Bible? What was reckoned a clearer sign of a false Christian, than to deliver up this book to be burnt? Did not believers in those times count it a delivering up their religion? Did they not brand those with the odious name of betrayers\* of their religion that did it? Have not the doctors of the Church in all ages appealed to this for the truth of their doctrine? Have they not with "this sword of the Spirit," encountered all the errors and heresies that sprung up in the Church? And did they not ever account it a main part of their office and function to expound and apply it to the people? All which put together, seem to be a clear and full evidence, that the Scriptures contain in them the full will of God concerning the salvation of man.

*Par.* But these you said were not the main arguments, but only like so many supernumerary auxiliaries, of which there were no need. You were mentioning some others.

*Min.* I was so; and they are taken from the Scriptures themselves, and the joint concurrent testimony of the catholic Church.

*Par.* I think, though the Papist will not grant the Scriptures to contain the whole will of God, yet they own them to be the Word of God; and therefore an argument from thence will be of as great force to them as to us.

*Min.* It ought to be so; and can any thing be clearer than these two texts to this purpose: John xx. 30, 31: "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name." 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17: "And that from

\* Traditores.

a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus : all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

*Par.* These are very plain, and nothing needed to be said after them ; but because they boast so much of antiquity and tradition, you may please to shew what they speak for us in this point.

*Min.* You must not expect that I should produce all the testimonies of the ancients to this purpose. Many of our learned men have done it to my hand ; and I wish you would give me leave to refer you to two great men indeed, who have done this work thoroughly and beyond contradiction ; Dr. Tillotson’s “ Rule of Faith,” part 4. sect. 2. And Dr. Stillingfleet’s “ Rational Account,” part 1. chap. 11. p. 261.

*Par.* However you may please to give a taste of one or two.

*Min.* I will then ; and they shall be of those who lived near, or not far remote from the Apostolical times ; and we shall find all of them fix on the Scripture, and not one mention the infallible testimony of the Church, much less the Roman, as the only ground whereinto faith is to be resolved : Irenæus\* tells us, “ That the Scriptures are perfect, as spoken from the Word of God and his Spirit ; and that they are the foundation and pillar of our faith.” Tertullian,† writing against Hermogenes the heretic, who asserted “ that all things at the beginning were made of some subject matter,” hath these words : “ Let those of Hermogenes’ shop shew that it is written : if it be not written, let them fear that woe which is allotted to such as add or take away.” And in the same place makes this profession for himself :‡ “ I adore the fulness of the Scripture.” St. Basil§ is also full to this purpose : “ It is a manifest falling from the faith,” saith he, “ either to reject any of those points that are written, or to bring in any of those things that are not written.” St. Gregory Nyssen,|| “ In that only the trnth must be acknowledged, wherein the seal of the

\* Lib. 2. c. 47. l. 3. c. 1. [vol. 1. p. 173. col. 2. Venet. 1734.]

† Tertul. adv. Herm. c. 22.

‡ Adoro Scripturæ plenitudinem.

§ Basil. Περὶ πίστεως, tom. 2.

|| Greg. N. De An. et Refu. tom. 2 p. 639.

Scripture testimony is to be seen." Clemens Alexandrinus\* calls the consent of the Old and New Testament, "The ecclesiastical canon, and the touchstone of true and false." St. Chrysostom,† "The most exact balance, square, and rule of of Divine verity." Vincentius Lirinensis‡ saith, "That the canon or rule of Scripture is perfect, abundantly sufficient in itself for all things; yea, more than sufficient." These may suffice, as you desired, for a taste; I have referred you, where you may have a more perfect account.

*Par.* I see plainly both Scripture and antiquity give it for the written Word to be the Rule of Faith; pray, upon what account do the Papists attribute it to the Church?

*Min.* Upon this twofold account; both, as they pretend, she is the only safe repository and conservator of certain unwritten traditions concerning this faith, and the only sure and infallible interpreter of those that are written.

*Par.* Do they wholly exclude the Scriptures?

*Min.* No, not in words, but in effect they do:§ they make it but an obscure part of the Rule; tradition is to supply its deficiency, and the interpretation of the Church its obscurity.

*Par.* What do they mean by their unwritten traditions?

*Min.* Certain doctrines and articles of faith delivered by Christ and his Apostles that were never committed to writing, but left in custody of the Church, to be transmitted to posterity by word of mouth; and these the Council of Trent ordains "to be received with the same religious reverence and affection as we do the Scriptures themselves."||

*Par.* But does not the Apostle exhort the Thessalonians, "to hold the traditions which they had been taught, whether by word or writing," 1 Thess. ii. 15?

*Min.* The Scriptures then might not be all written, the Apostles being all, or many of them, living: St. Paul had taught the Thessalonians before many necessary truths which he did not mention in this Epistle; but they being sure that all proceeded from the same infallible Spirit that was in him, the one was equally to be held fast, and adhered to with the

\* Clem. Alexandr. Strom. 2.

† St. Chrys. Hom. 13. in 2 Ep. ad Cor. [vol. 10. p. 631. Par. 1837.]

‡ Vincen. Lir. satis superque sufficiat. Cont. Hær. c. 2. [p. 4. Lond. 1611.]

§ Regula Fidei non totalis sed partialis. Bel. lib. 4. c. 12. de Verbo non scripto. [De Controv. vol. 1. col. 205. Par. 1608.]

|| Sess. 4. Decr. 1. [Labbe, Concil. vol. 14. col. 746. Lut. Par. 1672.]



other : the whole Christian doctrine, when first preached by our blessed Saviour and his Apostles was unwritten ; some parts of it were written before others, and some Churches had them before others ; but it was not long before the whole was completely written and delivered to all.

*Par.* It seems indeed, had not God been pleased to have ordered the whole Christian doctrine to be put into writing, we should not at this distance have been at so great a certainty what is Gospel and what not.

*Min.* At so great a certainty, say you ? We should have been at a great loss, and the whole doctrine of the Gospel endangered by multitudes of novelties and pretended Apostolical traditions. The devil very early put men upon this trade, first to broach new doctrines, and then (to gain credit and reputation to them) to entitle them to some Apostolical man or other, that were contemporaries with the Apostles, or lived not long after them.

*Par.* Can you produce any instances of this kind ? Did this way of corrupting the faith begin so soon ?

*Min.* Yes, truly : the Apostles were scarce cold in their graves when another doctrine than what they preached was published and fathered upon them ; and had not the true been committed to writing, in all likelihood, without the extraordinary mercy of God, it had long before now been lost and buried under heaps of traditionary forgeries. How soon did the millenary opinion spring up ? How fast did it grow and spread, and how long continue ? Papias affirming he had it from those who conversed with the Apostles. What a mighty difference was there betwixt the Eastern and Western Churches about the time of keeping Easter, whilst each pretended an Apostolical tradition for their own custom ? Others there were about the time our Saviour lived, and about the time of his public ministry ; but these are enough to shew, that if unwritten doctrines were so soon after the Apostles' death laid at their doors that were none of theirs, what little credit and trust is to be given to those that have been invented since, even in these latter ages, and attributed to them ?

*Par.* But do the Reformed reject all traditions whatsoever ?

*Min.* No : all the most learned of the Reformed, and particularly those of the Church of England, have a great veneration for what is truly primitive and ancient, and held by the catholic Church in the first ages ; whether they be expositions of Scripture, symbols of faith, devotional hymns, forms of

prayers, or decrees of Councils that were free and œcumenical, for the ending of controversies in matters of faith, or establishing rites and ceremonies for the more decent and orderly management of ecclesiastical affairs.

*Par.* I suppose every thing, that by evident reason may be drawn from Scripture, though not expressed in it, that is not contrary to it, and what neither in its nature nor consequence tends to corrupt the true catholic faith.

*Min.* Yes, every tradition of that nature ; and there is great reason we should have respect to such ; for when we see how the Fathers expounded Scripture at the beginning, and what were the articles of their faith, it cannot but be a great strengthening and confirmation of ours ; and the orders and canons left by them, are so many helps and directions to governors in succeeding ages what they may and what they ought to do to preserve the faith and the unity of the Church.

*Par.* I perceive you limit the traditions you allow of to those of the whole catholic Church, and especially to that in the first ages.

*Min.* I do so, and those we contend for more earnestly than the Romanists do ; they confirm us in many of our own doctrines, which, though they may be gathered out of Scripture, yet are not laid down there in so many words, such as infant baptism and the Divine right of episcopal authority above presbyters ; and they confirm us against many of the Church of Rome's, which, as they have no foundation in Scripture, so have not the least countenance from primitive traditions, as, I think, was made evident at our last meeting in the point of the Pope's supremacy.

*Par.* Are all others then to be suspected, whether their authors be private doctors or particular churches ?

*Min.* Yes, to be suspected, but not presently to be condemned without examination ; so far as their traditions agree with the written Word and those of the catholic Church, we approve of them ; but then it is not for any virtue derived on them from the authority of their respective authors, but for their own sake and the sake of the Scriptures to which they are conformable ; but if they have not the ancient catholic stamp and image upon them, they are to be disowned as illegitimate, and to be cast out ; and of this sort seem to be those additional Trent-doctrines, invented by particular men to serve a turn to promote the interests of that Church, and then espoused and adopted by the Church as catholic, and imposed on the world in a blind undiscerning age as such.

*Par.* This seems to be a severe charge, but I suppose you speak not without grounds.

*Min.* You may be sure of it ; for they are certainly such as contradict the Scriptures, which they own to be the Word of God equally with their traditions ; and therefore both cannot be true ; the Christian verity is but one, and cannot be contrary to itself ; either the Scriptures or their traditions are mistaken and must be rejected.

*Par.* But they say we take the Scriptures upon the credit of the Roman Church ; and why then do we so clamorously cry down their traditions ? May they not be believed in one thing as well as another ?

*Min.* That is a very great mistake ; it is upon the credit of the whole Church of Christ that we receive and embrace them, whereof the Roman Church is but a part ; they were committed at first to every particular church in the world to be carefully preserved, that they might neither be corrupted nor lost ; and we have the suffrage of all and every one of them for the canon of it ; unless we can think that all the churches in the world could conspire to impose upon us, we are safe ; and upon confidence they did not we receive them : let them shew us the same concurrent testimony of the catholic Church for their traditions, and we will receive them too.

*Par.* It was then the catholic Church that made the canon of Scripture.

*Min.* You must take me right. It is not the authority of the Church that gives the Scriptures their authority, but the Divine and inspired authority whence they proceeded ; knowing them to have been indited by the Holy Spirit in Christ and his Apostles, and finding by comparing the several copies lodged in the keeping of the several churches, how exactly they did answer to and agree with one another, she declared them to be canonical, and bore witness to their Divine authority.

*Par.* However, the Church of Rome was one that gave in her testimony for the canon of the Scripture.

*Min.* Yes ; but we have reason to bless God she was not the only one that was the keeper of the Divine writings ; she has so corrupted them since, men would have been apt to have suspected she had forged them at first ; she has not only added many apocryphal books to the holy canon, but so abused the canonical, that we must cease to wonder at their religion being different from ours, since their Bible is not the same.

*Par.* I hope you do not speak this without book ; one would be sure of it before he lays so great a crime to their charge.

*Min.* You shall judge of it yourself in Gen. iii. 15. That they might force the text to give some countenance to that extravagant honour and worship they pay to the blessed Virgin, instead of "that" or "he," they translate "she shall break thy head." Learned men well know how full of errors the Vulgar Latin edition is, and yet the Trent Council made it the only authentic one, and some of that communion prize it above the original. Who can compare the two Bibles put out by those two Popes not long after one another, Pope Sixtus V. and Pope Clement VIII.\* each duly authorised by each Pope, with a curse to every one that should use any other, and not perceive the many corruptions of both, and the palpable contradictions in each to one another ?

*Par.* I did not know before that they had thus served the Bible, but I have often heard how bold they have made with the writings of the Fathers ; a late ingenious author hath told us what they have done to St. Chrysostom's Epistle to Cæsarius for being against their doctrine of transubstantiation.

*Min.* It is very true, some of the Sorbonne doctors cut it out of the Greek edition of Palladius, published by Monsieur Bigot, 1680. The very original leaves, as they were razed out, are in the hands of a learned man I could name to you. I must not stay to shew you what spurious treatises have been composed by them, and fathered upon men of name and antiquity ; how they have put the genuine works of many of the Fathers into the inquisition, and racked and tortured them to speak on their side. How in some places sentences have been foisted in ; in others, passages left out, words changed, and points altered, and all to establish and spread the papal pride and usurpation : instances of every particular hereof, more than a few, are to be found in Dr. James's learned treatise of their "Corruption of Scripture, Fathers, and Councils."

*Par.* I have heard that book often mentioned, but never saw it ; pray, is it English ? And what is the design of it ?

*Min.* It is in English, and a very useful book. He gives us an account of no less than 187 treatises that have been forged by Papists, and scattered abroad under the names of the ancient Fathers, turns us to no less than fifty places of the true Fathers that have been corrupted by them ; shews us the

\* Dr. James's *Bellum Papale*.



infinite wrong their *Indices Expurgatorii* have done to innumerable authors, both ancient and modern, not sparing the very Bible itself.

*Par.* I think you have made it very evident, that the Church, upon the account of her traditions, is not the Rule of Faith; and truly after all the noise the Church of Rome makes about them, she does not, as I have been told, think fit to stick to it herself.

*Min.* It is true, there have been so many clashings and fallings out betwixt their apostolical traditions, that to keep peace amongst them, they are forced to fly to the judgment of the present Church, to determine which is the true child, and which the counterfeit. Dipping the person three times in baptism, in signification of the blessed Trinity, giving the eucharist to infants, administering baptism only at Easter and Whitsuntide, were once esteemed ancient and apostolical traditions, now in as little use amongst them as among us. The Epistle to the Hebrews,\* for near four hundred years together, was rejected by them, though now for a much longer time it has been received as canonical. Pope Gelasius† called it a grand sacrilege to deny the cup to the laity; the Council of Trent now anathematizes those that hold it necessary. Pope Gregory condemned the title of Universal Pastor as antichristian; Pope Boniface III. as greedily caught at it, and all his successors glory in it, as the top and flower of the Papal dignity.

*Par.* Then they do with their traditions as they do with the Scriptures, put what sense they please upon them, and neither the one nor the other signifies anything, till the Church has first catechised them, and taught them what to say.

*Min.* It is just so, when all is done; though for the better grace of the thing, they may pretend great regard to Scripture and tradition in what they hold for articles of faith: the definition of the Church, which they must have infallible, is with them the only and whole rule, and all their faith is built on that foundation.

*Par.* What do they mean by the Church, to which they attribute such an infallible spirit? In what part of the Church do they place it?

*Min.* Truly, you must not expect that I should tell you

\* St. Jerom. in Isa. c. 6. 8. [vol. 4. col. 95. Veron. 1735.]

† Gratian. de Consecr. Dist. 2. cap. 2.

this, for they cannot tell themselves ; sometimes it is in the Church virtual, the Pope, the visible head of it ; sometimes in the Church representative, a General Council ; sometimes in both, a Council with the Pope presiding in it. The truth is, it is with the Pope and a General Council, catch as catch can ; sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, has been uppermost, according as the Pope's power and interest was in the full or wane. The Council of Constance decreed in favour of a General Council, the Council of Lateran in favour of the Pope ; both have had their turns, and both have their parties and abettors.

*Par.* Were I a Romanist, I should be for the Pope. I desire to be excused from naming all my reasons ; but why should not this be thought a good one ? Is it not reasonable to lodge the infallibility where they fix the supremacy ? For his Holiness cannot but know that his supremacy is clipt, whilst the judgment of one, or many together, is to be taken and preferred before his.

*Min.* There is something in what you say ; but so many Popes have been such ignorant and lewd persons, some guilty of heresy, some of atheism, some of debauchery, as might be instanced in Liberius, Vigilius, Honorius, Adrian, Hildebrand, and others ; that all of them have not the face to say, Popes cannot err, who have actually erred in a very high degree so often. They have therefore compounded the matter, especially their late authors, and have placed it in the definitions and decrees of a General Council, confirmed and ratified by the Pope.

*Par.* But have not General Councils contradicted one another as well as Popes ?

*Min.* They must confess this too. The seventh General Council of Constantinople, held in the year of our Lord 755, and in the 13th year of Constantine Copronymus, whereat were present 338 bishops, condemned the use of images in churches on any account whatsoever, as a custom borrowed from the Pagans, justifies her decree both from Scripture, reason, and ancient Fathers, amongst whom Eusebius Pamphili's epistle to Constantia the empress, desiring the image of Christ to be sent her, is most worthy our notice and observation.\* “ What image of Christ do you mean ? Of his Divine nature ? That cannot be had ; as no man knoweth the

\* Hist. Magd. Cent. 8. c. 9.

Father but the Son, so no man knoweth the Son but the Father. Of his human nature? Understand, that the splendour and shining brightness of his glorified body, cannot be represented with dead colours and shining pictures." But the second Council of Nice, about thirty-three years after, in the eighth year of the reign of Irene and her son Constantine, consisting of 350 bishops, with as much zeal, determined for images, not only that they should be received into churches, but be adored and worshipped there. To this Council did Adrian, bishop of Rome, send an epistle, approving the worship of images; and several bishops that had condemned them in the Council of Constantinople here recanted their opinion, and begged pardon.

*Par.* I remember you shewed me before, how the decrees of the Council of Constance and Lateran were at sword-pike with one another in the point of supremacy.

*Min.* I did so; and I was going to shew you a further repugnancy of one Council to another, in the point of image-worship. The great Council at Frankfort, held under Charles the Great, king of France, in the year of our Lord 794, seconded that of Constantinople against images, and that too in spite of Pope Adrian's ambassadors, whom he sent on purpose to defend them. But the Council comparing the acts of the Council of Constantinople and Nice together, went a middle way, and whilst it allowed images and pictures in churches for decency and ornament, it strictly forbid all worship and veneration of them as impious, and against the law of God. In this Council all the arguments brought by the second Council of Nice for the adoration of images, are fully refuted, and Epiphanius's epistle to John bishop of Jerusalem, disallowing the very bringing in of images into churches, was recited; but whatever was said and urged therein against them, the Trent Fathers, when they came, overruled all, and the Council of Frankfort did not pull them down with more reason, than that Council set them up again with violence, denouncing an anathema against all that dare refuse to pay worship and veneration to them.

*Par.* Where must the infallibility be now? Methinks they should be ashamed to pretend to it.

*Min.* They beg your pardon for that, as a great man hath worded it: "They are sure they have it, though they know not where to find it."

*Par.* Pray, Sir, since they will not let this doctrine go, what do they allege in behalf of it?

*Min.* They force many places of Scripture to speak in its cause; they pretend an absolute necessity for it for many good purposes, *viz.* in order to the finding out the true sense of Scripture, to the preserving peace and unity, and to the preventing schisms and divisions, errors and heresies in the Church.

*Par.* I remember they cite all those places for it, where a power is said to be given to the Church to forgive sins, where the ministers of the Gospel are called God's husbandmen, labourers, building, are said to have the mind of Christ.

*Min.* But he must have a piercing eye that can discern the infallibility of the Church in these texts; but suppose it might be proved from hence, what reason has the Church of Rome to engross and monopolize them to herself?

*Par.* It is obvious that they are spoke in general, and so concern one part of the Church as well as another; but I suppose they have other texts in store, that seem to be more express and particular to their purpose.

*Min.* They often mention Matth. vi. 18, where Christ says to Peter, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church." But this text, I before shewed you, concerns the Church in general; and though God hath promised hereby that his Church shall never fail on earth, yet those words do not name the way and means; and God can do it without the help of an infallible guide on earth.

*Par.* I remember another they make use of; it is our Saviour's words to the Apostles, Matth. xxviii. 20: "I am with you always to the end of the world."

*Min.* This promise being made to the Apostles' successors as well as to the Apostles, cannot be interpreted to secure to them an infallibility, but only a general assistance in the discharge of their duty and office, for then all the Apostles' successors had been infallible by virtue of it, as well as themselves, and the governor of the Church of Sardis been preserved from error, who yet is blamed for "letting go what he had received and heard," Rev. iii. 1, 2, 3.

*Par.* I will not trouble you to name the rest, unless there is more difficulty to understand the sense of them, than of these.

*Min.* Only one more, if you please, because by the sound of the words it seems to be a little on their side. It is in 1 Tim. iii. 15, where the Church is called "the pillar and ground of truth." But now this, you must know, was spoken of the Church of Ephesus, that hath long since, as many other



churches have done, sinned against God's protection, and is come to ruin : the meaning of the words, not shewing what a Church is in her nature and constitution, but what is incumbent on her as her duty, *viz.* to be the great preserver and propagator of the Christian truth, like a pillar with a writing fixed on it, that is visible to all that pass by it. It shews not what a Church is, but what she ought to be, and is to be interpreted like those texts in Mal. ii. 7 : "The priests' lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth:" that is, he should do so, if he does his duty ; but how often does he fail therein, and the truth suffer by it? For so it follows, "but ye are departed out of the way, ye have made many to stumble." Prov. xvi. 10 : "A divine sentence is in the lips of the king, his mouth transgresseth not in judgment;" that is, it should be so, but they will not say it is always so, unless they think kings to be infallible too.

*Par.* I perceive Scripture will do them but little service ; I would be glad to see whether they can have any better luck with the reasons they pretend to.

*Min.* They tell us they have many, and those unanswerable, if you will believe them ; for without this infallible guide, we can have no true sense of Scripture, nor certainty of faith.

*Par.* I mistrusted they had not much to say, when I heard you mention they talked so big. If these be their strong arguments, I do not despair of an answer.

*Min.* You need not ; it is ready at hand, and what the meanest capacity may be able to give : are not all things necessary to salvation plainly set down in Scripture ? Does not the Scripture contain the duty of all ? And was not God able, or was he unwilling so to express it, as all should be capable to understand it ? Are not private men commanded "to read, to search the Scriptures, to prove all things, to try the spirits, men and doctrines that pretend to be inspired," by the Scriptures ? And must they not first understand the sense of Scriptures before they can measure and judge of anything by them ? Did Christ and his Apostles preach so as not to be understood by their hearers ? Could they not write as intelligibly as they preached, especially since they wrote the same things, and almost in the same form of words ? May not single persons come to the meaning and sense of Scripture by the same way as the Church does ? Has not God imprinted on men's minds such natural notions of himself, and of good and evil, according to which all revelation is to be interpreted ? Has he not

given to all reason to discern and judge? May not men be skilled in the original, understand the propriety of the phrase, find out the design and scope of the text, have the assistance of God's holy Spirit, and must not the Church go the same way? After all, may they not as well understand the laws of God, as the definitions and decrees of a Pope or Council?

*Par.* But the Church pretends to something farther and beyond all this; to immediate inspiration, and divine illumination.

*Min.* The best of it is, she must give us something more than her bare word, before we believe her: can she prove her extraordinary spirit by extraordinary works, or a voice from heaven? Is not all enthusiasm and Quakerism founded on this principle? Does not this wholly supersede the necessity of Scripture at all, since God can as easily reveal his mind to the Church by inspiration without Scripture, as the sense and meaning of the Scriptures?

*Par.* Certainly this is enough to convince any reasonable man, that the true sense and meaning of the Scripture may be learned without such an interpreter; that a man's own reason, assisted by the help of his spiritual guides, consulting the sense of the primitive Church, is the best and safest, and a direct way to a right understanding of Scripture.

*Min.* Yet there is one thing more that I have not mentioned; if I cannot find out the sense of Scripture without this infallible interpreter, the Church, how shall I know what the Church is, and that the Church is such an infallible interpreter? If you send me to be informed by the Scriptures, I cannot understand them till the Church has interpreted them to me; if you send me to reason and discourse, and such other ordinary means whereby other things come to be known; by the same way I may find out as well the sense of Scripture, as who is the interpreter of them.

*Par.* I remember they direct us to the Scripture to find out the Church; and to the Church to find out the sense of Scripture.

*Min.* Is not this to dance in a circle, and to prove nothing? A sophism that may make men's brains turn round, but not inform their minds? If the Scripture must be known before the Church, and the Church before the Scripture, neither one nor the other can be known, because they cannot be both first; unless we will make them both to be the same thing, as the Church of Rome in effect does (who will have the Scripture to

have no other sense than the Church puts upon it) and then all the proof amounts only to this, The Church bears witness to herself. For to say the Scriptures, interpreted by the infallible Church, declare the Church to be the infallible interpreter of Scripture, is no more than to say, The infallible Church says she is infallible; you must take it on her word: but you know what our Saviour said in a case not unlike to this, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true."

*Par.* But they say, as I am informed, that we must use our reason to discover our guide,\* but when that is once found out, we are to give up our reason, and all to be wholly guided by him.

*Min.* They are forced to allow this; for in their attempts to make a proselyte to their Church, they set before him reasons and arguments to move him to it, and that supposes he has both an ability and a right to judge of those motives, whether they be convincing or no. And has he a right to judge of the Church, and not of its doctrine? Or can he otherwise make a true judgment concerning the Church, than by judging first of the particular doctrines it holds? If it is an orthodox faith that makes an orthodox Church, the faith the Church professes ought to be examined before the Church is made choice of: but it seems a man must use his eyes and reason once for all: afterwards he has no need of either; he must see by other's eyes, and judge by other's understandings. But certainly a man must quite lose his reason, before he can so wholly abandon himself to another's guidance. I may, and ought to consult my spiritual guide and teacher, but I must know him well first, and be assured both of his skill and honesty, before I leave myself out, and wholly cast myself upon him; every man desires to walk safely, and he is the most likely to do it who sees where he goes.

*Par.* You will be pleased to give me leave to mention every thing that I can recall, that they urge in their behalf; they tell us that there are many things in Scripture hard to be understood: and many disputes and controversies oftentimes arise about the sense of it: that all sects and parties cite Scripture, and pretend it is on their side. Must, then, every man follow his own private judgment, and interpret Scripture according to his own fancy?

*Min.* No; the Church of England is far from allowing that:

\* Guide in Contr. pr. p. 3. R. H.

she advises us to compare one Scripture with another, to explain the more hard by the more easy, and so to prove what the sense of Scripture is, from Scripture itself; she sends us in her Articles and Canons to consult the catholic Church in the first ages, who are the best witnesses what is truth and what is not. The Apostles, as it should seem, very early drew up, and agreed upon a short summary of faith for the use of the Church, and each sent it to be carefully preserved and maintained by the several churches of his own plantation: this is called in Scripture, 2 Tim i. 13, Rom. xii. 6, 1 Tim. vi. 20, "The form of sound words," the proportion of faith, the *depositum*, or thing committed to Timothy's trust; accordingly, in after ages, when any dispute arose in the Church concerning the sense of Scripture, or an article of faith, each Church was sent to, to give an account what was its belief and sense in that particular, and what they all agreed on could not be looked upon otherwise than the truth, than according to that faith the Apostles had taught and committed to their charge.

*Par.* So I have read it was in the first memorable Council of Nice; when the heresy of Arius, denying the Divinity of Christ, was debated by the Fathers, and a dispute arose concerning the sense of that text in St. John, "I and my Father are one;" each Father was to bring in the sense of that church over which he presided, and all agreeing that the text was to be understood of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, it was presently so determined, and Arius and his doctrine condemned.

*Min.* But you must here remember, as you go, that when we have recourse to the catholic Church for the sense of Scripture, we appeal to it, not as to an infallible interpreter, but as to a most credible witness of the Apostolical doctrine. We build not our faith on the authority of the ancient Fathers, but on that very thing they built theirs, the authority of the inspired writings; only we are much strengthened and confirmed in ours by the exact agreement it bears with theirs.

*Par.* Ought we not also to pay a due respect and submission to that particular Church, under whose care and government the Divine Providence hath cast us?

*Min.* Yes, and to obey her in all things relating to the order and outward polity of it, and in matters of faith to follow her as far as she agrees with the Scripture and catholic Church; and wherein we are convinced she does not so, not to set up a



Church against her,\* to be humbly silent, and modestly dissenting, unless in points fundamental, following the Apostle's rule, "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself." Had not every Church a right to make its own rules and orders for decency, and upon the breaking out of any difference to interpose its authority for the closing of it, it would be very deficient in its constitution, as wanting power to secure its unity, and consequently both its being and well-being.

*Par.* Sir, I have not many things more to start. They sometimes tell us, that it is inconsistent with the goodness and wisdom of God, as the great lawgiver of his Church, to leave things thus at random and in confusion, and no better to provide for its peace and unity, than to suffer every man to judge as he will and believe as he list.

*Min.* All this is to pretend to be wiser than God. Does not God know how to govern his Church without their direction? Is it not more suitable to the nature of man, to be left to the use of his reason and judgment in his actions, than to be under an infallible dictator, that hampers, as it were, his faculties, and leaves no place for deliberation and choice? Is there any virtue in believing, where all the difficulty is not to believe, as it happens when the judge is infallible? Is not peace and concord very desirable in the State as well as in the Church? And must God be censured for an imprudent governor, because he has not taken sufficient care of that too, by an universal infallible judge in civil matters? Is it not as absolutely necessary to salvation, that we should be holy as well as orthodox? And must the goodness and wisdom of God be called in question, because he has not provided a never-failing means to keep men from sin, as is pretended he has done to keep men from error? To restrain their wills, as to direct their judgments?

*Par.* They say again, Do we not see, how, for not owning the infallible Church, and leaving every man to interpret Scripture for himself, schisms and heresies, and divisions swarm amongst us? What distractions in religion? What endless controversies in the Church?

*Min.* This may be true: but will an infallible judge help the matter? All things necessary in religion are so plain, that no infallible judge can make them plainer; his interpretation cannot be plainer than the text. I need ask none but myself, what it is to love God, and to believe in Christ? And for

\* Article 20, Church of England.

controversies in lesser matters, they are of so little consequence to religion, that they may as well be borne withal by mutual charity amongst Christians, as ended by peremptory decrees and decisions by an infallible authority. But sects and divisions, God knows, there are too many amongst us; but could an infallible judge be able to silence and put an end to all?

*Par.* So they pretend. But I read, that in the Apostles' days, though they had the infallible assistance of God's holy Spirit "to lead them into all truth," there were schisms and divisions in the Church.

*Min.* It is well observed, there were so; and if so great a measure of the Divine Spirit could not do it then, how can we imagine that the mere shadow and dream of infallibility should do it now? Have the Romanists themselves found so great benefit by it, that they can upon experience with any assurance recommend it to us?

*Par.* I have heard indeed, that there are as many and as fierce disputes and controversies amongst them, as amongst us.

*Min.* You were not misinformed: the disputes betwixt the Franciscans and Dominicans, the Jansenists and the Molinists, are not yet put an end to; and many others might be named. As we are not agreed with them that there is such an infallible guide, so are they as little agreed amongst themselves who it is. Now we say, "Physician, heal thyself."

*Par.* However, I am afraid, these multitudes of opinions and sects that are amongst us, do a great deal of hurt to religion; it is apt to make some men think there is none, because there are so many; and every man uncertain of his own.

*Min.* It may be so, but there is no reason it should; if I must question the truth of every thing that others deny or doubt of, I must not believe my own eyes; for there have been those that have denied there was any such thing as motion; and there are those that deny bread to be bread; then the Romanists cannot be certain that their Church is infallible, for all the rest of mankind deny it. If by a sober and modest use of my reason, and those ministerial assistances Christ hath afforded me in his Church, I may certainly know the true sense of Scripture, I may also certainly know what is the true religion, for this depends upon the other; but does it follow, because others have neglected the means, and are of no religion, that I must not believe mine?

*Par.* I see plainly, an infallible judge, were there one, could

not prevent errors and heresies from springing up ; pray, why does God permit them in his Church ?

*Min.* St. Paul gives one reason of it, 1 Cor. xi. 19 : there “ must be heresies,” or divisions in the Church, “ that they which are approved might be made manifest ;” and God who can bring good out of evil, can turn them several ways to his Church’s good and advantage. They afford an occasion, that the true faith is better explained and confirmed to us ; they put men upon inquiry, and the more diligently any man examines, the more clearly he discerns, and the more stedfastly he believes afterwards. To this we owe many excellent writings of the ancient Fathers ; the errors and heresies that arose in their days concerning the Divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost, were the occasion that we have those doctrines so clearly stated and fully explained to us.

*Par.* Sir, you have abundantly satisfied me as to this point. I ask but one question more : since the Christian doctrine more strictly than ever any before, binds all its professors to unity and love and peace, how come so many disputes and dissensions and animosities to arise amongst them ?

*Min.* They proceed from whence all other evils come, from men’s lusts and passions. That which makes some men to be of no religion, makes others of any, and, as occasion serves, of many. They have a lust to gratify, or an interest to serve, and they will be of that sect that can best comply, or best pay them for it. I need not tell you from what root most of the Romish errors and superstitions grow ; and because the name of Scripture is venerable, and carries authority with it, that many times is pressed into the service, and by an unnatural construction forced to bear witness against itself. So long as there is vice in the world, there will be error ; no Church or religious society can be wholly exempt from either ; that is the best and purest that has the fewest of both.

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE NATURE, UNITY, AND  
COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: WHEREIN  
MOST OF THE CONTROVERSIES RELATING TO THE  
CHURCH, ARE BRIEFLY AND PLAINLY STATED.

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THE INTRODUCTION.

IN the preface to the "Vindication of some Protestant Principles of Church-Unity and Catholic Communion, from the Charge of Agreement with the Church of Rome," I promised a Discourse about the Church, and intended to have discharged that obligation, which has been very importunately demanded of me, long before this; and indeed had finished, what I now publish, several months ago: I shall not trouble my reader with the reasons why I then laid it aside; I hope, "The Preservative against Popery" will satisfy him, that I have not been idle in the mean time; but the true and only reason why I have delayed to publish this part, which has been so long finished, was, because I intended to finish the whole before I published it, which would have given more general satisfaction to my readers: but I have not leisure for that now, and think it more advisable to publish a part than none at all, especially since what I here publish is an entire discourse concerning the nature, unity, and communion of the catholic Church.

It is sufficiently known, that there is no argument of greater consequence in our disputes with the Church of Rome, than the unity and authority of the catholic Church. Nothing will serve them but to make the Church of Rome the catholic Church, and then nobody is a member of the Church catholic, who is not in communion with the Church of Rome; and since nobody can be saved but in the Church, all heretics and schismatics, who are not in communion with the Church of Rome, must be damned, and there is a sad end of us all.

Thus the catholic Church is an infallible teacher of faith: for who dares say, that the catholic Church can fail, or err in fundamentals? Since Christ himself has promised, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church:" and there-



fore the Church of Rome, which is the catholic Church, and principle of catholic unity, must be infallible; and no Christian ought to dispute anything which she has determined in matters of faith.

The Bishop of Rome is the head of this catholic Church, St. Peter's successor, and Christ's vicar upon earth; and therefore he is the supreme governor of the Church, from whom all other bishops derive their authority, and to whom all Christian princes and emperors themselves, are subject *in ordine ad spiritualia*, which will go a great way to a temporal sovereignty and universal empire.

These pretences, indeed, have been sufficiently baffled by Protestant divines, ever since the beginning of the Reformation; but we have to deal with men who have confidence enough to be baffled and not to own it, to see all their arguments confuted an hundred times over, and to repeat them again with a good grace, without replying to those answers which have been so often given them, or so much as taking notice that there ever had been any answer made to them.

But after all that is said on one side and the other, I am very sensible there never will be an end of these wranglings, without settling the true notion of the catholic Church; which, though a great many good things have been said about it, I think was never thoroughly done yet: what my present performance is, I must leave other men to judge; but if my notion be right, I am sure there is an end of all the vain and arrogant pretences of the Church of Rome, as will appear to any indifferent reader, who peruses this discourse with care and judgment.

The foundation of all I have laid in an inquiry into the true notion of the unity of the catholic Church; which gives occasion to state the true notion of the Church, and most of those controversies which depend upon it. I have there only considered what is meant by the unity of the catholic Church, as that signifies the Church of Christ both in heaven and earth. What relates to the nature and unity of particular Churches, their government, union and combinations into one catholic communion, must be reserved for another Part.

## CHAP. I.

CONCERNING THE UNITY OF THE WHOLE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN HEAVEN AND EARTH.

It is acknowledged by all Christians, that Christ has but one Church, which is his one body: but then we must consider the extent of this one Church. The Church on earth indeed is but one, but this one Church on earth is not the one Church and one body of Christ, but only a very little part of it. Christ has but one Church and one body in all, and therefore it must comprehend the whole Church from the beginning to the end of the world, at least from the first planting of a Church by Christ and his Apostles, till the last judgment, for they all belong to this one Church, and this one body of Christ; so that far the greatest part of this one Church is already translated into heaven, and the Church on earth is but a very little part of the whole; for the Church in heaven, and the Church on earth, are but one Church and one body. Here we must lay the foundation, if we would rightly understand what makes one Church; for since this unity comprehends the whole Church, we cannot argue merely from the Church's being one, to infer any other kind of unity, but what makes the whole, but what unites the whole Church in heaven and earth into one body; for that only is the true unity of the Church, because the whole Church in earth and heaven is the one Church. And therefore to place the unity of the Church in anything which can concern only one part of the Church, but not the whole, as suppose that part only which is on earth, not that which is in heaven, is manifestly absurd, because it does not give an account how the whole Church is one, and yet the oneness of the Church properly relates to the whole, not to a part: for a part, be it never so much one, can be but one part, not the one Church. Now hence we may learn, wherein the unity of the Church does not consist, and wherein it does.

1. Wherein the unity of the Church does not consist. As 1. The unity of the Church does not consist in its being one organized politic body, under the government of one visible head on earth: for though a visible head on earth might

make the Church on earth one, yet it cannot unite the Church on earth and the Church in heaven into one body, unless this visible head on earth be the head of the invisible Church in heaven too: for if the unity of the Church consists in being united under one head, that head must be the head of the whole Church, or else the Church is not united in the head, if the head, which is the principle of union, be not the head of the whole. Now I suppose no Papist will say, that the Bishop of Rome is the head of the invisible as well as of the visible Church; and then the Church is not one, as being united under the Bishop of Rome; though there are some things which would make one suspect, that the Church of Rome did believe the Pope to be the head of the invisible as well as of the visible Church: for if his authority be confined to the Church on earth, one would wonder whence he should pretend to canonize saints in heaven, or to release souls out of purgatory, unless his being Christ's vicar on earth makes him his vicar in heaven, and in purgatory also: but this by the way.

If they say, that when they speak of the unity of the Church, they mean only the unity of the Church on earth, and that the Pope is the visible head of this unity:

I answer, 1. That they must grant, then, that they speak very improperly; for the Church on earth is not that one Church which is the one body of Christ, and therefore the unity of the Church does not consist in the headship of the Pope; but they ought only to say, that the unity of the Church on earth consists in its union to the Pope.

2. And therefore they must quit all their arguments for the Pope's headship, taken from the Church's being one, the one body of Christ; for the Church on earth is not this one body of Christ: and therefore it does not follow, that because Christ has but one body, therefore the Church on earth must have one visible head.

3. Nay, they must confess, that the formal and essential unity of the Church on earth does not consist in its union to the Pope; for the Church on earth is one with the Church in heaven, they being both but one Church, and therefore must have the same essential unity; for how they should be one by two sorts of unity, that is, be one without the same formal unity, is very mysterious, and near akin to a contradiction. And therefore since the unity of the Church in heaven does not consist in its union to the Pope, no more does the unity

of the Church upon earth, the unity being the same in both. And thus all their arguments from the unity of the Church on earth, to prove an universal visible head of the Church, are lost too.

2dly. Nor does the unity of the Church consist in joining together in the external and visible acts of worship, or in maintaining mutual intercourse and correspondence with each other; these are duties which result from Church unity, when they are practicable (as I shall shew more hereafter), but the unity of the Church cannot consist in them, for the Church in heaven and earth are one without them; and so may distant Churches on earth be one Church without any such visible correspondence.

3dly. Nor can the unity of the Church consist in such Articles of Faith as have not always been the faith of the Christian Church. For since the whole Church in all ages is but one, it can have but one faith; and that cannot be the one faith which has not been the faith of the whole Church. And therefore it is ridiculous to talk of such a power in the Church of every age, as to make or declare new articles of faith, unless there be authority to make a new Church too in every age; but then how the Church should change its faith in every age, and yet continue one and the same Church, is worth inquiry. As far as any Church has altered the faith of the Apostles and primitive Christians, it is become a new Church; and a new Church, I think, is not the same with the old: the unity of the present Church, considered as a Church, does not consist only in its unity with itself, but with the Church also of former ages; for unless it be one with the Apostolic Churches, it cannot be the one Church of Christ. And therefore, though all the Christian world should at this day unite in the faith and worship of the Council of Trent, it would be as much divided from the one Church of Christ, as it differs from the faith and worship of the Primitive Church.

I shall only observe here by the way, what a contradiction the worship of saints and the Virgin Mary is to the belief of one Church. For if the Church in heaven and earth be but one Church, then the most glorious saints in heaven, not excepting the blessed Virgin herself, are but members of the same body with us, which makes it as absurd to worship them in heaven, as it is for one member of the same body on earth to worship another, for they are the same body still; and though there is a great difference in honour between the members of the same



body, yet that relation that is between them will not admit of the worship of any member. For it is no act of communion in the same body for one member to worship another. To pay divine honours, to erect temples and altars to the greatest saints, advances them above the degree of fellow-members, and if they be not fellow-members of the same body, then the Church in heaven and in earth is not one Church. From whence we may learn who they are who divide the unity of the Church, they who command the worship of saints and the Virgin, or those who refuse it. We believe the Church in heaven and earth to be the one body of Christ, and that the most glorious saints are but members of the same body with us, and therefore not the objects of our worship, but of our brotherly love and honour; but those who worship saints, destroy the unity of Christ's body, by dividing the Church on earth and the Church in heaven; for nothing is more contrary to the sense of mankind than to worship those of our own communion. And therefore the natural interpretation of that worship they pay to saints is, that they are not members of the same body with us, but are as much above us, as the object of our worship is and ought to be.

2dly. This notion of Church unity, that it must include the whole Church, from the beginning of Christianity to the end of the world, as well that part of it which is already transplanted into heaven, as that which still sojourns on earth, which is all but one body, may direct us wherein to place this unity of the Church, which to be sure can consist in nothing but what belongs to the whole Church: any notion of unity which does not explain how the whole Church is but one, must be false, because the unity of the Church properly belongs to the whole, and not to a part. Now as this unity respects the whole Church, it is impossible there should be any other head of unity but Christ; any other medium of unity but the Gospel covenant, nor any other kind of unity but the unity of one spiritual body, communion or society: that we are all united by the Gospel covenant in one body to Christ, the one and only Head of the Universal Church.

1. The unity of the Church must consist in its union to some one Head. This is acknowledged by all Christians, and therefore I need not prove it; and it is as evident that none can be the head of the Universal Church but only Christ, and that for this plain reason, because it is union to Christ alone which makes the Christian Church. The Church is the Church of

Christ, and therefore he alone is the Head of his own Church. This the Romanists themselves grant, that Christ alone is the Head of his Church, and that the Bishop of Rome is only a vicarious head, Christ's vicar on earth. But when we speak of the unity of the Universal Church, part of which is translated to heaven, and part still militant on earth, it must be united in Christ alone ; for as he needs no vicar in heaven, where he himself is immediately present, so there can be no vicar on earth, as a common head of unity for the Church on earth and in heaven ; and therefore the unity of the whole Church cannot consist in its union to such a vicarious head, as I observed before ; and then there can be no other head of unity but only Christ.

2. It is as evident also, that the only medium or bond of this union between Christ and the Church is the Gospel covenant, for that is the foundation of our relation to Christ ; he is our Head and Husband, our Lord and Saviour ; we his subjects, disciples, spouse, and body, by covenant. And therefore the sacraments of the new covenant, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are the federal rites of our union to Christ : Baptism is our regeneration or new birth, whereby we are incorporated into his body ; in the Lord's supper we spiritually eat his flesh and drink his blood, which signifies and effects as intimate an union to him as there is of our bodies and the food we eat ; and this proves that there can be no other head of unity but only Christ, because the Gospel covenant unites us to none else ; which I take to be St. Paul's meaning, when he reproves the Corinthian schism, 1 Cor. i. 12, 13 : " Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided ? Was Paul crucified for you ? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul ? " That is, that there is no other head to whom we can be united but only Christ, who purchased the Gospel covenant by his death, and into whose name we are baptized ; his alone we are, to whom we are united by baptism, we are in covenant with none else, and therefore belong to him alone : if they might have owned any other head besides him who died for them, and into whose name they were baptized ; if Christ had made Peter the vicarious head of unity, as the Romanists pretend, St. Paul's argument against these sidings and factions, that one said he was of Paul, another of Apollos, a third of Cephas or Peter, had not been good, for at least those who were united to Peter were in the right ; but St. Paul knew no other head of unity but only

Christ, because the Gospel covenant, which is the only medium and bond of union, unites us to no other head ; and therefore those who said they were of Peter, or belonged to him as their head and centre of unity, which is the case of the Church of Rome at this day, were as great schismatics as those who said they were of Paul.

Now this covenant extends to the whole Church, and therefore unites the whole Church to Christ. For those who are translated into heaven are still united to Christ by the same covenant with the Church on earth. There are several duties indeed of this covenant which the saints in heaven are exempted from, because their state and condition there is above them. Their faith and hope is turned into sight and enjoyment ; their spiritual warfare is accomplished, for there is no devil, nor flesh, nor world to tempt them ; the mystical supper of our Lord is celebrated by them, not in external symbols and figures, but in a more divine manner, in the immediate presence of the Lamb ; but though the duties of the covenant change with their state and condition of life, yet the covenant is the same still ; by this covenant it is that they are in heaven, and still expect the completion of their happiness in the resurrection of their bodies immortal and glorious ; and by the same covenant it is that we hope, when our warfare is accomplished, also to get to heaven, and to rise together with them at the sound of the last trumpet : and therefore the whole Church in heaven and earth is one, by being united to the same head by the same covenant.

3. The unity then of the Universal Church can consist in nothing but this, that the whole Church both in heaven and earth, is united in one body to Christ. For since there is no other head of unity for the Church but Christ, the formal reason of this unity must consist in the union of the whole Church to Christ, which makes the Universal Church the one body of Christ, and this is the unity of the Church. For I think it is no less than a demonstration, that the unity of the Universal Church, which is part in heaven and part on earth, cannot be the unity of an organized body, which must consist in a regular subordination of different ranks and degrees of men, as the Church on earth does : for the Church on earth and in heaven, which is the one Church of Christ, is no such one common governed society ; and therefore the unity of the Church cannot consist in the unity of one external government.

But how then is the whole Church but one body ? Truly I

know no other way, but that they are all united to Christ in the same covenant, and all who are thus united to him, Christ accounts his one body. Thus Christ, as bearing his Church, is compared to a vine, all whose branches, we know, are united only in the stock or root, John xv. 1 ; and to an olive tree, Rom. xi. 17 ; and to a sheepfold, which consists of single and individual sheep, which are one fold only, because they are under one shepherd, John x. 16.

It is true, indeed, the Church is called also the body and spouse of Christ, but as that relates to the Universal Church, it does not signify an organical body (though that the Church on earth is also by Christ's own institution, of which more hereafter), but it is so called for mystical reasons, which I shall briefly explain to you.

1. Now I first observe, that the relation between man and wife is but an emblem and figure of that union which is between Christ and his Church. Hence the Apostle exhorts "husbands to love their wives, even as Christ loved his Church ;" and tells us of marriage, "it is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his Church," Ephes. v. 25, 32.

2. To be the body and the spouse of Christ signifies the same thing. Hence the Apostle argues, "that men ought to love their wives as their own bodies," ver. 28. "For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church," 29. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," 30. So that the wife is the body, the very flesh of the husband, and so is the Church of Christ.

3. To understand this matter, why the Church is called the body and spouse of Christ, we must inquire why the wife is called the body of the man, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone ; and the reason of that is, because the woman was formed out of the man. God at first formed man with an entire human body, of the dust of the earth ; and out of man, while he slept, he formed the woman, who, though a distinct separate person, yet was part of the man, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. And this was a natural marriage, for two were by nature one flesh ; and this was the natural and fundamental reason of the matrimonial union. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." For though other women are not made as Eve was, no more than other men are made as Adam was, yet the woman being originally of the man, the reason holds as to the whole kind ; and in subsequent marriages



a legal ceremony and contract does what a natural formation did at first, that is, unites two into one flesh.

Thus the blessed Jesus, out of great pity and compassion to fallen man, intending to marry us unto himself, and thereby to recover us out of a state of sin and misery, first marries our nature to himself by an hypostatical union, as man was created first, and then the woman formed out of him. Christ took a human body of the substance of a pure virgin, which signifies that it was an espousable nature which he took, and was a pledge and earnest and medium of our marriage to him. For though we cannot be married immediately to the Divinity, yet to a God incarnate we may. For marriage requires that husband and wife be of the same nature.

But this is not enough, that the husband and wife partake of the same nature, but the woman must be formed out of the man; which makes her flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. And thus, accordingly, the Church is formed out of the body of Christ, and is in a mystical sense, his very flesh and bones, as St. Paul speaks, "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." For the sufferings of Christ in the flesh gave life and being to the Church; he purchased to himself a Church by his own blood, that is, he formed to himself a Church out of his broken body, as Adam's body was broken, and a rib taken out of him to form the woman. And therefore as the woman was made of the same flesh with Adam, so the sufferings of Christ in his human nature purchased a Church, not of angels, but of men, of the same nature with himself, as the Apostle observes, Heb. ii. 16, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham;" and therefore is not the Saviour of angels but of men; is not married to the angelical but to the human nature.

And to make the analogy still more complete, as the woman was formed out of Adam's side so was the Church out of Christ's side, for when he was pierced with the soldier's spear there came out of his side both "water and blood," John xix. 34. And the Evangelist sets a peculiar remark upon it: "he that saw it bare record, and we know that his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe," v. 35; and this is specially observed, and great weight laid upon it, 1 John, v. 6: "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." This some think signifies no more, but that it was a demon-

stration that he was truly dead ; and that his heart was wounded where there is a capsula called the pericardium, which contains water, which being pierced, water came out together with blood ; but the water and blood came out distinct, though from the same wound, which was never known before, and cannot be done again by the greatest artist ; and though this might be a reason why St. John might take notice of it in his Gospel, where he gave an account of his death, yet it does not seem a sufficient reason why he should lay such a weight on it in his Epistles ; “ This is he who came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood : ” and therefore I doubt not but the ancient Fathers were in the right, who tell us that the two sacraments of the new covenant flowed out of his side, which are the formation of this spiritual spouse his Church, the birth and the nourishment of it ; Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which came from his wounded body, and have both of them a peculiar respect to his death and passion.

Thus we see the Church is called Christ’s body and spouse for mystical reasons, because it is formed out of his broken body, his death and sufferings giving life and being to the Church ; and therefore it is but one body, because all those who are redeemed by his blood, and united to him by covenant, which is a kind of marriage-vow and contract, are his body and spouse. And therefore the sacraments of the new covenant, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, do no otherwise unite us to each other than they unite us all to Christ, which makes us all one body ; or as the Apostle speaks with respect to the Lord’s Supper, “ For we being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.” We all partake of the same body of Christ, which is therefore called the “ communion of his body and blood ; ” and therefore we all are but one body ; so that it is a vain thing to inquire after any other principle of unity for the whole Church, but the union of all Christians to Christ, who are one body by their union to one head.

But it may be objected against this, that this confines the Church to the company of the elect, who are the mystical body of Christ ; that according to this notion there can be no visible Church upon earth ; for no man can tell who belongs to the mystical body of Christ, which is made up only of true and sincere Christians, and no man can see who they are without seeing their hearts. Now this is a mighty prejudice against any notion, if it destroys the visibility of the Church, which is

so plainly taught in Scripture, and does, for ought we know, unchurch the greatest number of visible Church members ; if the Church consists only of those who were elected from all eternity, and are in time called by the grace of God to a state of real holiness and sanctification, and made the living members of Christ's body, I cannot possibly see how there can be a visible Church on earth ; for this internal grace which makes a Church member invisible, and therefore Church members are invisible too, and then I fear the Church itself must be invisible, if all the members of it are invisible ; for invisible members cannot make a visible society : and to say that the field in which the corn and the tares grow together is visible, will not make the Church visible, unless this visible field, as visible, be the Church, and then the tares as well as the corn must be Church members : for to see where the corn grows, if we cannot see the corn, does not make the corn visible ; and if the corn only be the Church, invisible corn cannot make a visible Church. Which has made me often wonder that some learned Protestants, and that of late too, have so much insisted on this notion, which gives manifest advantage to their adversaries ; and serves no end that I know of, but what may better be served without it.

But the union of the Church to Christ, which I have now explained, is a visible union ; for we are united to Christ by the Gospel covenant, and the covenant is visible ; the sacraments of the covenant, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are visible, the profession of faith and obedience to Christ, made by these visible sacraments, is visible also ; and therefore the Church, which is united to Christ by a visible covenant, visible sacraments, and a visible profession, is visible also.

But you will say, can wicked men then be members of Christ's mystical body ? Yes ; no doubt but they may in this world, if they can be in covenant with him. We are united by covenant, and those who are thus united are members of his body, and Christ has but one body, which is his Church, and mystical spouse. And what absurdity is there in saying that men may be in covenant with Christ, and not perform the conditions of the covenant, nor obtain the rewards of it ? This no man will deny, but that bad men who live in visible communion with the Church, who are baptized in the name of Christ, and feast at his table, are visibly in covenant with him ; for if the sacraments of the covenant do not prove that we are in covenant no man can tell whether he be in covenant or not. Now

all that are in covenant with Christ are his body, and unless we can find two covenants and two bodies for Christ, we must grant that good and bad men in this world are in the same covenant and members of the same body. Our Saviour tells us, that there are some branches in him which bear no fruit ; but they are in him for all that, though they shall be taken away, and separated from him, John xv. 2. St. Paul dissuades the Corinthians from fornication by this argument, that they are the members of Christ : " Know ye not, that your bodies are the members of Christ ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them members of an harlot ? God forbid," 1 Cor. vi. 15. Which supposes that such a thing may be done, that the members of Christ may be made members of an harlot : and that supposes that very bad men may be members of Christ's body.

But are not all the members of Christ mystically united to him ? And can there be such a mystical union between Christ and bad men ? I answer, if by mystical union be meant, being united in the same life and spirit, it is plain that bad men are not thus mystically united to Christ, for they are not living but dead members of his body, they are branches that are in the vine, but bear no fruit ; and yet may be members of his mystical body, which is so called, not upon account of any mystical union (which some men talk of, but no man could ever explain) but for mystical reasons, as I have already shewn you. Now if those mystical reasons, for which the Church is called the body of Christ, include wicked professors, and concealed hypocrites, as well as truly good men, then I hope bad men may be said to be the members of Christ's mystical body, without such a mystical union to him.

Now I observed before, the mystical reason why the Church is called the body of Christ, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, is because he purchased the Church with his own blood ; the Church is formed out of his broken body, as Eve was formed out of the body of Adam. And therefore if bad men who are in covenant with Christ are the purchase of his blood, and have a covenant right to the expiation of it, and all the benefits procured by it, then they are the members of his mystical body, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. And methinks no man should deny that those who are in covenant with Christ should have a covenant right to the expiation of his death, and all the blessings purchased by his blood ; for otherwise we cannot tell what it is to be in covenant, if it



confer no right to the privileges of it : and yet no man has a right to the purchase of Christ's blood, but those who are his body ; and therefore if bad men have such a covenant right, as certainly they have, if they be in covenant, then they are by covenant united to his body.

If you object, that by this reason all mankind are Christ's mystical body, for he died for all men, and therefore they are all the purchase of his blood, and consequently they are his mystical body, which is formed out of his broken body : I answer, it is true, indeed, that in some sense Christ died for all, because none are excluded from the benefits of his death, who unite themselves to his body by faith and baptism ; but yet he died for none, so as to give them an immediate right and title to the purchase of his blood, for his purchase is confined to his Church, which is his body. He is the Saviour of his body : he loveth his church, and gave himself for it. And therefore his Church only is his mystical body, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, and the sufferings of his natural body extend no farther than his mystical body : and therefore Christ is said to have "reconciled both (Jew and Gentile) to God in one body by the cross," Ephes. ii. 16. That is, he has reconciled all, both Jews and Gentiles, who by faith and baptism are united in his one mystical body, to God by his sufferings on the cross. So that we are not the body of Christ, and cannot be said to be the purchase of his blood, till we are united to him by covenant.

This we may learn from that analogy there is between the law and the Gospel. The legal sacrifices, especially that great sacrifice on the day of expiation, were typical of the sacrifice of Christ, and the carnal Israel was a type of the spiritual Israel, or of the Christian Church. Now as the virtue and expiation of legal sacrifices was applicable only to the carnal Israel, so the expiation of Christ's death extends only to the spiritual Israel, the Christian Church, which is Christ's mystical body ; which one thing, if well considered, would answer all the difficulties, and silence those fierce disputes about universal redemption. However, this shews what difference there is between bad Christians, and the world of infidels ; the first are visibly in covenant with Christ, and are the purchase of his blood, and have a covenant-right to the redemption of it, and therefore are members of his mystical body, for none else have any right to his sacrifice ; the other have no interest in him,

nor relation to him. And if we will not allow of this, I desire to know who those children of the kingdom are, that at the last day shall be shut out.

But is not our mystical union to Christ then an union of spirits, a participation of his nature and life, having his Spirit dwelling in us, being led by the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit? I answer, This is our spiritual union to Christ; this is to live in him, to be quickened by him, but it is not our mystical union, as that signifies such an union as makes us members of his mystical body; for that in a strict proper sense is only a covenant-relation. Every member of Christ's mystical body ought to partake of his life and spirit, or else they are only dead and rotten members, which shall be cut off, and shall never inherit eternal life; but such dead members are members still, till they are cut off, either by Church censures in this world, or by the sentence of Christ in the next.

This participation of the life and spirit of Christ, is not our mystical union to Christ, but the effect of it. We cannot receive the influences of life and grace from Christ, till we are united to him, and made the members of his body; for his spirit only quickens and animates his own body; and we are united to his body by covenant, and by the sacraments of it, which convey this divine life and spirit to us: and therefore baptism is our regeneration, or new birth, the beginnings of a new life, because it incorporates us into Christ's mystical body, which puts us under the influences and communications of his life and spirit; as when a branch is engrafted into a stock, it receives nourishment and life from it. So that these divine and supernatural influences are consequent upon our union to Christ; and though all who are united to Christ have these influences of grace, as the root naturally communicates its sap and juices to all its branches, yet all do not improve it, do not digest it into principles of life and action, do not bring forth fruits worthy of it, like dead and withered branches, who cannot receive the sap and nourishment which ascends from the root, and would quicken them, were not its entrance stopped and hindered; but notwithstanding this, they are members and branches still, though dead and fruitless: there is no account indeed had of them, Christ knows them not, and does not reckon them as his, and therefore the description and characters of the Church in Scripture, are such as belong only to living members, to those who are renewed and sanctified,

and quickened by the Divine Spirit; but yet they do belong to Christ's mystical body, though they are in it only as a dead branch is in the vine.

But how can the Church on earth, and the Church in heaven be one Church and one body, if the Church on earth has such corrupt and rotten members in it? for the Church in heaven has none but living and holy members. I answer, the same covenant makes them the same Church, and the same body of Christ, and that there are bad men in the Church on earth, and none but saints in heaven, does not prove that they are two churches, but that they are in two different states. Of right, none but sincere believers and truly pious men ought to be members of the Church on earth, as well as in heaven; but the government of the Church, the receiving in and casting out of the Church, being entrusted with men who cannot see the heart, or who are not careful in the exercise of discipline to preserve the purity of the Church, secret hypocrites may be received into the Church, and those who are openly profane may not be cast out of it; but in the other world Christ makes the distinction, and separates the chaff from the wheat, and therefore the Church in heaven can consist only of good men, because bad men can find no admission there. And besides this, it is agreeable enough to the state of the Church on earth, and indeed cannot well be otherwise, that good and bad men should be intermixed in it; because it is a state of trial and discipline, of growth and improvement; though bad men, as that signifies hypocrites and unbelievers, if they were known, ought not to be received into the Church; yet if they be, by the influences of grace, and the instructions of the word, and the prayers of the Church, and the examples and conversations of good men, and the prudent exercise of discipline, they may be reclaimed to virtue, and become living members of Christ's body; those who were dead before, may recover a new life, by being engrafted into this heavenly vine: nay, indeed, though all men are not equally wicked, yet no man has this divine life but only from Christ, and the communications of his grace, which he cannot receive from Christ till he be united to him; and therefore the Apostles required no other qualification for baptism, but only faith; the very worst of men, who believed in Christ, and professed obedience to him, were received into the Church by baptism, and put under the influences of grace, without expecting till they had first reformed their lives; which, besides the authority of the Apostles,

seems to me much more agreeable to the Gospel dispensation, than that discipline which was afterwards used in the Church, when they did not immediately baptize those who professed to believe in Christ, but kept them in the state of catechumens a great while, till they were instructed in the principles of Christian faith, and had given proof of a holy and virtuous life; which is to expect, that men should become new creatures before they are born again, that they should walk in the Spirit, before they have received the Spirit in baptism, that they should bring forth fruit, before they are implanted into this spiritual vine. Now if men, who have lived very wicked lives, may be admitted to baptism upon their profession of faith and repentance, that in this laver of regeneration they may wash away all their sins, and become new creatures, and receive the Spirit of grace and sanctification to reform their lives; this shews, that the very constitution of the Church on earth is such, that there may be very bad men in it, unless all who are baptized should infallibly prove good men: for bad men, who profess the faith of Christ, and repentance of their sins, have a right to baptism, where they must receive grace to mortify and subdue their lusts and renew their natures: and yet if after baptism they resist the grace and Spirit of God they will continue bad men still, and this the ministers of the Church can never know whether they will or not. Nay, the Gospel-covenant admits the children of Christian parents to baptism, and it is impossible to know how those who are baptized in their infancy will prove when they are men: and yet these are all members of the Church, and the mystical body of Christ, at least till they are cut off by the censures of the Church; and there is no inconvenience in this, if the governors of the Church were but so strict in their discipline as to prevent all public scandals: for since the Church on earth is the school and nursery of virtue, where bad men may be reformed and become saints, since Christ is that spiritual vine from whom alone we can receive the communications of a divine life, it is very fitting that all believers should be received into the Church, and incorporated into Christ's body; for it cannot be known whether they will prove good or bad men, fruitful or barren branches, till they partake of the sap and fatness of the root, till they have received such communications of grace as may renew them into a divine nature. And therefore to say, that none but real saints are members of the Church on earth, is to make no difference between a school



of trial, exercise, and discipline, and the state of perfect and consummate souls ; between a state of warfare, where the victory is doubtful, and the triumphant company of conquerors ; between those who run in a race, and those who have won the prize : for such a difference there is between the state of the Church on earth, and in heaven. We cannot run this spiritual race, unless we be in the Church, for there is no prize, no crown to run for out of it. And therefore those who lose, as well as those who win the prize, must be in the Church, and members of it : they are all in the same covenant, that if they overcome they shall receive the crown : good men conquer in this world, and triumph in heaven ; bad men are conquered, and they lose their crown, and this makes the separation and difference between the Church in heaven and earth : in heaven there are none but those who have conquered ; on earth all, who run in the same race, and are engaged in the same warfare, are mixed together in the same body and society : those who conquer, and those who are conquered, are of the same company on earth, but none but conquerors are crowned in heaven.

Thus I have shewed wherein the unity of the Church consists, that the whole Church both in heaven and earth are united to Christ in the same covenant, which makes it his own mystical body : and it was necessary to lay the foundation here, for without this it is impossible to understand what the unity of the Church on earth means, most of the mistakes in this matter being plainly owing to that first and fundamental mistake about the true notion of Catholic Unity, as it includes the unity of the universal Church, part of which is translated to heaven, and part still militant on earth.

Those who have been aware of this, that the Church in heaven and earth is but one Church, have hence concluded, that the catholic Church is only the number of the elect ; that none but truly good men, who are renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, are members of Christ's mystical body ; which makes the Church on earth as invisible to us, as the Church in heaven. Others, when they talk of the unity of the Church, never think of the Church in heaven, and therefore advance such a notion of Church unity, as excludes the Church in heaven, as if the Church on earth were the whole Church of Christ ; or that the Church in heaven and earth were not one Church, or that the notion of Church unity must not relate to the whole Church, but only to one part of it. Thus, as I observed before, the Romanists

do, who place the unity of the Church in its union and subjection to the Bishop of Rome, which can concern only that part of the Church which is on earth, for the Church in heaven is not under his government. Others, considering that the unity of the Church consists in the union of all the parts and members of it to Christ, have no regard at all to the unity of the Church on earth, as that also is one body and communion; and therefore it will be time now to apply this notion of Church unity to the unity of the Church on earth.

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## CHAP. II.

### CONCERNING THE UNITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON EARTH.

IF the whole Church be one, to be sure every part of it must be one with the whole, and therefore one with itself, with that same kind of unity which belongs to the whole. So that the essential unity of the Church on earth, that which makes a Church, and makes it one, is, that all true Churches are members of the one mystical body of Christ, as being all united to him, as to their Head, by the same covenant. So that whatever makes a Church a true Church, makes it a member of the one catholic Church, or of the one body of Christ. And here comes in what the Apostle makes essential to this one body; "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," Eph. iv. 5: which signifies what I said before, being united to Christ in the same covenant. For Christ is the "one Lord," to whom we are united; the "one faith" is the condition of this covenant; and the "one baptism" is the federal rite of it, or the sacrament of our union to Christ. Where this is not, there is no Church; and where this is, there is but one Church; how many particular Churches, or distinct communions soever this Church is divided into; from whence it is evident that there never can be more than one Church in the world, for those nominal Churches which have not the same Lord, the same faith, the same baptism, are no Churches, and all that have are but one, which makes it a ridiculous triumph of the Church of Rome, as if we Protestants did not believe one catholic Church, or could not tell where to find it, when we

profess to believe but one Church, and that all true Churches are members of this one Church.

For it is plain from this account, that though all the Churches in the world were united in one ecclesiastical body, yet this external visible union is not the thing which makes them the one body of Christ. They are one body, by being all united to one mystical Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, not by an external and visible union to each other; this external union is a duty which all Christians and Christian Churches are bound to observe, as far as possibly they can; but all true Christians and Christian Churches are the one body of Christ, whether they be thus visibly united or not. But for the better understanding this matter we must consider—

I. The true notion of the Catholic Church on earth.

II. What the nature and unity of a particular Church is, and how every particular Church is a part of that Universal Catholic Church, which is the body of Christ.

III. What that unity and community is, which all distinct particular Churches ought to maintain with each other, and whence this obligation results.

I. The true notion of the Catholic Church on earth. Now it is evident from what I have already discoursed, that the true notion of a Church is the *Cætus Fidelium*, or the company of the faithful, of those who profess the true faith of Christ, and are united to him by baptism. There can be no other notion of the universal Church in heaven and earth, but the whole company and family of the faithful, who are united to Christ by covenant, and are his mystical body in the sense above explained. And if the universal Church in heaven and earth be the whole company of the faithful, the catholic Church on earth must be the whole number of the faithful on earth, for we must still retain the same notion of a Church, where the whole consists of univocal parts, for there every part has the same nature with the whole.

I know indeed of late the clergy have in a great measure monopolized the name of the Church, whereas, in propriety of speech, they do not belong to the definition of a Church. They are members of the Church, as they are themselves of the number of the faithful; and they are the governors of the Church, as they have received authority from Christ the supreme Lord and Bishop of the Church; but they are no more members of the Church, than the king is his kingdom, or the shepherd his flock. And therefore St. Paul expressly

distinguishes the Church from the Apostles and ministers of it. 1 Cor. xii. 28. "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." These are placed in the Church for the instruction, edification, and good government of it; and therefore are of a distinct consideration from the Church in which they are placed. Thus, Eph. iv. 11, 12: "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;" that is, the Church of Christ, which is therefore distinguished from the pastors and teachers of it. Thus in directing his Epistles to several Churches he gives us the definition of a Church. 1 Cor. i. 2: "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours;" that is, the whole company of the faithful. Eph. i. 1: "Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:" which is the true definition of a Church. Col. i. 2: "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colosse." And Phil. i. 1, he expressly distinguishes the saints or Church, as that signifies the company of the faithful, from the bishops and deacons: "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."

The learned Launoy\* has produced various texts of Scripture for this definition of the Church, that it is the company of the faithful, and has proved by the testimony of the Fathers in all ages, even down to the Council of Trent itself, that this was the received notion of the Church, till it was altered by Canisius and Bellarmine. Canisius puts Christ's vicar into the definition, that the Church is the visible collection of all baptized believers, under one head, Christ in heaven, and his vicar on earth, which makes the Church a monarchy. Bellarmine defines the Church to be a company of men, united together by the profession of the same Christian faith, and the communion of the same sacraments, under the government of lawful pastors, but chiefly of the Bishop of Rome, as the one vicar of Christ on earth, which makes the

\* Johan. Launoïus Nicolao Gatineo, Ep. xiii. vol. 8.



Church a kind of mixed and tempered monarchy ; the government of bishops, and the Pope as supreme vicar : whereas before these men, neither pastors nor bishops, much less the Pope of Rome, were ever put into the general definition of a Church ; for as for St. Cyprian's definition, I shall account for it hereafter.

And indeed it stands to reason, that they should not ; for pastors and bishops are set over the Church, are overseers of the flock, to instruct and govern it, and therefore must be distinguished from the Church which they govern. The Church is the mystical body of Christ, which is in subjection to Christ the Head ; but the bishops and pastors of the Church, considered as such, represent the head, and not the body, for they receive their power and authority from Christ, and act in his place and stead, as he tells them after his resurrection, " As my Father hath sent me, so send I you," John xx. 21. And, " He that receiveth you, receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me," Matth. x. 40, and John xiii. 20. And therefore, as Christ the Head is distinguished from the body, so are those also who act under the Head, and represent and exercise his authority in the Church. As private believers, they are the members of the Church ; as Church governors, they are the vicars of Christ.

Now from hence I shall observe some few things, the use of which we shall afterwards better understand.

As 1. That bishops and pastors are not the Church, but the governors of the Church ; and therefore the promises made to the Church, do not belong to the bishops of the Church, as that " the gates of hell shall not prevail against it : " which certainly proves that the Church shall never totally fail ; but does not prove that the bishops, or any bishop of the Church, shall be infallible. For the bishops are not the Church ; there are distinct promises to the Church, and to the pastors and ministers of it, and they ought to be kept distinct, which will put an end to a great many controversies between us and the Church of Rome.

Thus, if St. Paul, in his Epistle to Timothy, 1 Tim. iii. 15, calls the Church " the pillar and ground of truth," whatever that signifies, it belongs to the Church, or to the company of the faithful, not merely to the pastors and bishops of it. And therefore the infallibility of the Pope, or General Council, can never be proved from it, though " the pillar and ground of truth " should signify infallibility.

Thus whatever authority Popes or General Councils may challenge in matters of faith, yet if they decree anything contrary to the common faith of Christians, their decrees are not the faith of the Church, but the faith of Popes and General Councils, who are not the Church, though they are the governors of it; and yet under this venerable name of the catholic Church, every packed conventicle challenges an indisputable authority to its decrees.

2. Nay, as bishops are not the catholic Church, so neither are they the representatives of the catholic Church, much less is any one bishop the whole catholic Church virtual. The office of a bishop is not to represent, but to govern the Church, and therefore bishops are not the Church's representatives by institution, no more than the king is the representative of his kingdom. How then do they come to be the Church's representatives? Did all the Christians in the world, who are the catholic Church, ever intrust them with this power? Did they ever resign up their faith into the hands of their bishops? This never was done, and yet no man has a representative but by his own consent; and if it could be done, bishops then must sit in Council, not only as bishops, but as lay representatives, if two such different capacities are not inconsistent; and yet bishops have challenged this authority only as bishops, and excluded the laity, nay, presbyters themselves, from any votes; and therefore such councils of bishops, who acted only as bishops, could not be the representatives of the catholic Church. In matters of discipline and government, bishops act not as representatives, but governors of the Church, by that authority which they have received, not from the people, but from Christ; and their decrees and constitutions about such matters, have a sacred and venerable authority, when they do not contradict any divine laws and institutions. But bishops have no authority over the faith of the Church; nay, the Church herself has no authority to alter the faith, and therefore can give no such authority to her bishops: however, if she could, she never did, and therefore no council of bishops can be the Church representative in defining articles of faith. As bishops are the supreme pastors and teachers of the Church, they may declare what the faith is, and agree what doctrine shall be taught in their churches, and consent to censure and excommunicate those who will not profess to believe as they do; but if they make any decrees contrary to the common faith of Christians, no Christian is bound to

believe them, nor is ever the worse for their anathemas and excommunications; and it is a ridiculous thing for them to call this the faith of the catholic Church, which is only the decrees and definitions of some bishops in it, who are far enough from being the catholic Church. And this I think sufficiently proves, that the most General Council that ever was may err, and yet the catholic Church not err, for bishops are not the catholic Church, nor so much as the representatives of it; and therefore could it be proved that the catholic Church could not err, this would not prove the infallibility of a General Council, which is not the Church, for the faith may still be preserved pure and uncorrupt among private Christians, even when General Councils err.

3dly, I observe farther, that the whole catholic Church on earth is not one organized body; for it is only the whole company of the faithful, and no ecclesiastical ministers or pastors belong to the definition of it; and yet unless some œcumenical pastor be essential to the notion and definition of the catholic Church, it cannot be one organized body. The catholic Church indeed is organized by parts, that is, the whole company of the faithful are distributed into particular bodies under the government of particular bishops, which makes a particular Church, and is essential to the definition of it; of which more presently: but the catholic Church itself is the whole company of the faithful, who are united in one body to Christ only, who is the only Head of his Church. Now hence it evidently follows,

1. That no organized Church can be the catholic Church, nor the bishop of it an œcumenical pastor; because the catholic Church is not organized, but every organized Church is a particular Church. Which shews how vain the pretences of the Church of Rome are to be the catholic Church, and of the Pope of Rome to be the universal bishop.

2. It as evidently follows, that there neither is, nor can be any visible tribunal of the catholic Church, which shall be the centre of catholic communion, and have authority over all particular Churches in matters of faith, and worship, and government. For the catholic Church being no organized body, it has no authority, and can have no tribunal.

1. It has no authority. For the whole company of the faithful, which is the true notion of the catholic Church, are the mystical body of Christ, and in subjection to him, as a wife is subject to her husband. The catholic Church is made

up of particular and individual Christians, who are all immediately united to Christ their Head, and are made one in him ; and though bishops, as the ministers of Christ, have received authority from him to govern the Church, which they exercise in particular Churches over which they are placed, yet as members of the catholic Church, they are not considered as bishops, but as private Christians ; for it is not their authority in the Church, but their union to Christ, which makes them members of his body ; and thus they are united to Christ no otherwise than all other private Christians are. Now if the catholic Church be only a company of private and particular Christians, united immediately to Christ, and made one body in him, the catholic Church has no more authority than particular Christians have, which is none at all. The catholic Church is united to Christ by a belief of his Gospel, obedience to his laws, and a participation of his Spirit, which is a state of perfect and absolute subjection to him, and therefore can have no authority to alter the faith, to make a new creed, or a new Gospel, which would be to have power over Christ, not to be subject to him. To be sure, unless we will grant this authority to every particular Christian, the catholic Church cannot have it, which is only the whole multitude of particular Christians, who are united singly to Christ, and made one body in him ; and therefore are not such a body as can make a new faith, and new laws, but are made one body by embracing the same faith, which they must receive from Christ, but have no authority to make ; because their receiving this faith unites them into one body in Christ, and they continue one body in Christ no longer than they profess this faith, and therefore never can have authority to change it. Where a multitude of men unite themselves into one body or civil society, to form and model their own government, and to make laws for themselves, there the whole authority is in the community, and they may make and alter and repeal laws as they please : but where a society is formed by a voluntary submission of singular and particular persons to known and stated laws, and no man can be of this society without submission to these laws, nor continue longer in it than he does submit to them, it is a contradiction to say, that such a body of men have any power over the laws, because it is only their submission to such laws, which makes them such a society : the whole society in this case have no more authority than a single man, for they are not a society for government, but for obedience and subjection.



Christ indeed has placed an authority in his Church for the instruction and government of it; but an authority in the Church, and the authority of the Church, are two very different things. The first signifies the authority of Christ, who is the Head; the second is the authority of the Body, which is the Church: the Head has authority over his Church, and may appoint what ministers he pleases to exercise this authority, but the Church has no authority at all, no more than the body has, which is subject to the head.

This may be thought a very nice distinction between the authority in the Church, and the authority of the Church, but it is as useful as it is true: for though the authority of Christ must be much more sacred and venerable, than the authority of the Church, whatever authority it were supposed to have, yet the name of the catholic Church is thought much more venerable than the name of bishops, though they are the ministers of Christ; and therefore those who would impose upon the faith of Christians, talk of nothing less than the authority of the catholic Church, which sounds very big, and frights people into a submission. While they pretend only the authority of Christ's ministers, private Christians make bold to examine their commission, and how far their authority reaches, and whether they do not prevaricate in the exercise of this authority, as it is possible ministers may do; but the name of the catholic Church strikes all dead, for who dare oppose the decrees of the catholic Church? which is to condemn the whole catholic Church of error or heresy: who dares separate from the catholic Church? which must be an unpardonable schism, and a state of damnation; since it is universally agreed, that there is no salvation to be had out of the catholic Church: and thus when a packed conventicle of schismatics and heretics usurp to themselves the name of the catholic Church, they impose upon Christians under so venerable a disguise, and enslave them to their own dictates; but now all these amusements vanish, when we remember that the catholic Church has no authority; that whatever the authority of bishops in or out of council be, it is not the authority of the Church, but the authority of Christ, and it is not his authority neither, when they exceed their commission, and teach such things as he has given no authority to teach; and therefore we may reject such a council of bishops, without condemning the catholic Church, and renounce their communion without separating from the catholic Church.

And this very consideration, that the catholic Church has no authority, and therefore cannot innovate in matters of faith, nor alter the laws and institutions of our Saviour, is little less than a demonstration, that there is no authority in the Church neither to do it. For the bishops and pastors of the Church, as they are Christ's ministers, so they are themselves members of the catholic Church; now as they are members of the catholic Church, they must receive nothing but what Christ has taught; for the Church is founded on the faith of Christ, and has no authority to alter it: now is it imaginable, that bishops, as private Christians and members of the catholic Church, are obliged to believe nothing but what Christ has taught, and yet as bishops, or Christ's ministers, have authority to teach what Christ has not taught? That is, that as bishops they have authority to teach that, which as private Christians, they themselves must not believe, if they will continue members of the catholic Church: nay, can we imagine, that Christ has given authority to his ministers to teach that which the catholic Church must not receive? For if the catholic Church has no authority, it must no more receive new doctrines than make them.

I know, indeed, nobody will pretend to an authority of making new articles of faith, but only of declaring what the faith is; but this is the very same thing, if this authority of declaring be such, as to oblige all people to believe such declarations without any dispute or examination; for then they may make a new faith under a pretence of declaring the old; as we see the Council of Trent has done, which has declared such doctrines as the Christian Church was a stranger to before: and there is no difference, that I know of, between declaring and making an article of faith, which was neither declared nor made before.

And therefore Christian bishops and pastors have no such authority either to make or to declare articles of faith, as can oblige all Christians to believe it merely upon their definitions and declarations: it is their office to preach the Gospel, to convince and persuade gainsayers by Scripture and reason, which obliges all Christians diligently and impartially to attend to their instructions: but yet leaves every man at liberty to judge, whether they preach the Gospel of Christ or their own inventions.

2dly. That the catholic Church has no authority, is evident from this also, that it has no visible tribunal wherein to exercise this authority. For the catholic Church is nothing

else but the whole company or multitude of individual Christians, who are all singly united to Christ, and made one body in him, and considered as the catholic Church are not the one body of Christ, nor can be, under any other notion. So that had the catholic Church any authority, it could be exercised only by the whole multitude of Christians, for nothing else is the catholic Church; and this is as impossible, as it is for the whole multitude of Christians to meet together in one place.

But cannot the catholic Church meet and act by its representatives, as kingdoms and commonwealths do?

I answer; I have already proved, that all the bishops of the Church, much less any one bishop, cannot represent the catholic Church; for as bishops they are not the Church, but the governors of it under Christ; and no man ever yet thought of any other representatives for the Church; and it is evident, *de facto*, that there are no other representatives; for the whole multitude of Christians never did make choice of any such representatives, and no man can be represented but by his own consent: and if there could be any such representatives made by the unanimous vote of all the Christians in the world (which I think is morally impossible), yet then the highest and most sovereign authority in the Church would be derived from the people, which I suppose the Church of Rome will not very well like.

Nay, indeed, it is absolutely impossible, that the catholic Church should be represented; for the catholic Church is the whole multitude of Christians, considered as the whole company or multitude; now a multitude, as a multitude, can never be represented by any thing but itself, there can be no formal, nor virtual multitude, but the whole entire number. The catholic Church signifies all Christians, and if you leave out any of the number, it is not all, and therefore is not the catholic Church. Now, if the catholic Church have any authority, it must have it as it is the catholic Church, that is, as it is the whole company of Christians; for particular Christians have no such authority, as all men grant; and therefore that which destroys the catholic Church, must destroy its authority too, and any thing less than all, makes it cease to be catholic; and therefore the catholic Church cannot be represented by a few of the whole number, because a few are not all, and therefore not the catholic Church. It is a different case, indeed, when every particular man has an original right and share in the power, and the whole power is not formally seated in the

whole body, for then it may by common consent be contracted into one or more hands, by particular men's giving up their share in the government, as some fancy that civil societies were first formed; but where the power is formally seated in the whole and not in particular members, as the authority of the catholic Church must be, if it be the authority of the Church considered as catholic, there it is evident the authority must continue in the whole, and can by no consent be put into a few hands; and then it is impossible that the catholic Church can have any representatives, nor consequently any visible tribunal.

And yet that dispute between the Church of Rome and some Protestant divines, which is managed with so much warmth and zeal, about the perpetual visibility of the Church, issues in this controversy about a visible tribunal of the catholic Church; for nothing else will do the Protestant cause any hurt, or the Popish cause any good. We do say, and we may safely say, that there always has been, and ever will be a visible Church; for while there are any men who visibly profess Christianity there will be a visible Church: and what then? What then? Why, then, you must hear the Church; then you must submit to the authority of the Church; then you must believe as the Church believes, and receive your faith from the decrees and definitions of the Church. But pray, why so? Has every visible Church this authority? No; but the catholic Church has. Suppose that: but how shall I speak with the catholic Church, which is dispersed over all the world, and is nothing else but the whole number of Christians all the world over? Now it seems impossible for me to speak with all the Christians in the world, and to know what their belief is in all matters of controversy; and though the catholic Church is visible, and part of it is to be seen in England, and part in Holland, and part in France, &c. yet no man can see it altogether, nor speak with all the Christians in the world together; and therefore though the catholic Church be visible, it cannot determine any one controversy, unless there be some visible catholic tribunal, from which we must receive the faith of the whole Church: this the Papists assert, and make the Church of Rome to be that visible catholic Church, or visible tribunal of the catholic Church, to which all Christians are bound to submit. Now, besides what I have already proved, that the catholic Church neither has, nor can have any such visible tribunal, suppose such a thing might be, yet this dispute about



the visibility of the Church is nothing to the purpose; for though the Church be visible, it does not hence follow, that the catholic Church has such a visible tribunal, to which all Christians must submit: and if the visibility of the Church does not prove one supreme catholic tribunal, what do the Papists get by the Church's visibility, or what do the Protestants lose by it?

The Church of Rome is a visible Church, and so is the Church of England; and if mere visibility give this authority to a Church, the Church of England has as good authority as the Church of Rome, because it is as visible a Church.

4. In the next place I observe, that the essential unity of the catholic Church is not an external and visible union of an organized body, because the catholic Church itself is not an organized body. There is and can be but one catholic Church, because the whole company of Christians is this catholic Church; but then the essential unity of the catholic Church does not consist in an external and visible union of all Christians, which is the unity of civil societies, of kingdoms and commonwealths, and other inferior corporations, which are united under one visible government, which knits and ties them together, as nerves and sinews do the members of the natural body; but though there be an external and visible union in and between particular Churches, of which more presently, yet the unity of the catholic Church consists only in the union of all Christians to Christ, which makes them his one mystical body.

This is a very material point in opposition to the pretensions of the Bishop of Rome, who will needs be the supreme and oecumenical pastor, and head of unity to the catholic Church; and though the Christian world never owned him so, as has been abundantly proved by learned men, especially by the learned Dr. Isaac Barrow, in his "Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy," which is a sufficient confutation of such a claim, yet it will be of no great use to shew, from the nature of the catholic Church, and the essential unity of it, that it cannot be so; and there are several considerations which will make this very evident.

1. That there is no other Head for the whole catholic Church on earth to be united to, but only Christ: for the catholic Church is the whole company of Christians; and to whom can the whole company of Christians be united, but only to Christ? For the whole clergy, as well as laity, are

included in the notion of the catholic Church, in the whole company of Christians; and therefore unless you can find out a bishop who is not of the number of Christians (and such an one would be a very monstrous head for the Christian Church), he cannot be the head, because he is a member of the catholic Church, and must himself, with the rest of Christians, be united to the Head: which I think is a demonstration, that no bishop can be the head of the catholic Church, because it is a contradiction to be the head and a member of the same body. A bishop is the pastor and governor of a particular Church, and a member of the universal Church; but to be the head of the universal Church, of which he himself is a member, is a contradiction.

2. Nor can the essential unity of the Church consist in our union to any other head but Christ, because it is our union to Christ alone which makes the Church; and that which makes the Church, must make it one; for what does not belong to the essence of a thing, cannot be the principle of an essential unity. It is the Church of Christ, because it is united to him, and to him only, by faith and the Christian sacraments; and therefore it is the one Church of Christ, because the whole Church is united to him, and to him only, as it must be, if no other union can make a Church; and where there is but one head of union, there can be but one body. No other union can make a Church, and therefore no other union can be essential to the unity of the Church.

3. And therefore, though our Saviour had appointed an universal pastor, as the Bishop of Rome pretends to be; yet he could not have been the head of unity to the catholic Church; he had in that case been the supreme governor, whom all Christians had been bound to obey; nay, more than that, he had been the centre of Church-communion to all Christians; which is the external and visible unity of the Church, when all Christians live in the same communion, like one household and family. But there is a vast difference between the essential unity of the Church, and the external exercise of it in a visible communion among Christians; between being one and living in unity; union to Christ alone makes the Church one, but the exercise of this unity in a visible communion, is a duty which results from our unity, and must be expressed in such ways as Christ has prescribed, of which more anon; and had Christ appointed an universal pastor, communion with, and subjection to, this universal pastor had been necessary to

the external unity of Church-communion, but yet had not been that which makes the Church one, which is one before and without it; the not distinguishing of which, has occasioned great mistakes in this matter, as will appear in the process of this discourse.

4. I observe farther, that there is a wide difference between being a supreme pastor, and a vicarious head of the Church, a title which is given to the Bishop of Rome, not without great injury to Christ our Head. Christ, had he pleased, might have appointed a supreme pastor for the government of his Church; but as he is Head of the Church, he cannot have a vicar, or vicarious head: for though a head signifies a supreme governor too, in Scripture phrase, yet Christ is not merely a head of government, but of union; and though a governing head may have a vicar or lieutenant, yet a head of union cannot, no more than a natural head can; for the union between Christ and his Church is as immediate as between the head and the members, between the husband and the wife, which will admit of no intermediate vicars.

The Church is called the body and spouse of Christ, as I have already observed, for mystical reasons, because it is formed out of his broken and crucified body, as Eve was out of the body of Adam; upon which account we are said to be flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone; that is, the Church is redeemed and purchased by the blood of Christ: and thus he is the Head of that body which he himself has bought at the price of his blood. We are united to Christ by faith in him, by being baptized in his name, by feeding on the sacrament of his body and blood; the effect of this union is, that we receive from him the pardon of our sins, and the influences of his grace and Spirit: thus Christ is our Head, and thus none but Christ can be the head, not so much as the vicarious head of the Church, as I think I need not prove. We are redeemed by no other but Christ, and therefore the Church is his mystical body only: we are united to no other by faith and sacraments: our union to no other person can entitle us to the pardon of sin, and the grace of the Holy Spirit; and therefore Christ alone is the head of union to his Church: it is a Church, and it is one Church, not by its union to the supreme pastor on earth, if there were such an one, but by its union to Christ: for the unity of the Church consists in its union to its head, and it is evident that the Church can have no other head but Christ; and therefore can have no other principle or centre of unity.

Now from hence it plainly follows, that no Christian can separate from the catholic Church (in this sense of it, as it signifies the whole company and family of Christians, which is the true notion of the catholic Church) while he continues a Christian; for that is a contradiction, to be a Christian, and not to belong to the whole number of Christians; that is, to be a Christian, and to be no Christian: for if he be a Christian, he belongs to the number of Christians, and then he is a member of the catholic Church, and consequently not a separatist from it: nothing can separate us from the catholic Church, but what forfeits our Christianity, either a final apostasy, or such heresies as are equivalent to apostasy: which shews how vainly the Church of Rome charges us with schism and separation from the catholic Church, because we disown the authority of the Pope, their pretended head of the Church, and reject a corrupt communion, though we are Christians still, and we hope of a much purer communion than they are. Schism and separation is a breach of the external and visible communion of the Church, not of the essential unity of it; the Church is one Church still, whatever breaches and schisms there are in its external communion; for the unity of the catholic Church consists in the union of the whole to Christ, which makes them one body in him, not in the external communion of the several parts of it to each other. And therefore it is not a separation from one another, but only a separation from Christ, which is a separation from the catholic Church. But what the true notion of schism is, I shall discourse more at large hereafter.

5. I observe further, that the indefectibility of the catholic Church does not depend upon the indefectibility of any organized Churches; for the catholic Church does not consist of organized Churches, as organized, but is made up of particular Christians; and therefore, while the whole race of Christians does not fail in the world, the catholic Church cannot fail. There is no promise, that I know of, to any particular Church, that it shall not fail, and all organized Churches are particular. Several of them have totally failed, others have been very greatly corrupted, both in faith and manners and worship; but had these failures and corruptions been much greater and more general than ever they have been, yet while there are a number of good Christians preserved in the world, though not united in one visible body, the catholic Church does not fail; for since the catholic Church is not an organized Church, nor made up of organized Churches as such, though



all the particular organized Churches in the world were so corrupt, as not to deserve the name of true Churches, if there be a number of good Christians preserved among them, though unknown and concealed, as it was in the time of Elias, the catholic Church is safe amidst all the corruptions of particular Churches.

I am abundantly satisfied, that there always has been, since the first planting of Christianity in the world, and I believe always will be to the end of the world, a true visible Church ; but yet I do not think the indefectibility of the Church necessarily requires a perpetual visibility ; that the Church must needs be owned to fail, if there should be no visible organized Church, with whom we could hold communion. This indeed would mightily eclipse, but not extinguish the Church ; for it is certain the catholic Church subsists in single and individual Christians, who may lie concealed from public notice, and therefore it is not sufficient to prove that the Church has failed, though there were no visible society of Christians, but what were corrupted with damnable practices and errors.

It is very true, were there no visible society of Christians, no administration of baptism, by which men are made members of the Christian Church, and this state should continue so long, till the whole race of baptized Christians were lost in the world, there would be too much reason then to say, that the Church had failed too ; for I cannot see how the Church can subsist without a number of baptized Christians ; but this never was the state of the Church, and I believe never will be ; for Antichrist himself sits in the temple of God, which supposes that even in his reign there is a visible society of Christians. Now how corrupt and degenerate soever the external state of the visible Church may be, while there is a society of baptized Christians, though so corrupt in their external policy and government, faith and worship, that it may admit of a dispute, whether they are a true Christian Church or not, yet though the visible state of the Church may be Antichristian, there may be an invisible number of Christians among them, who may preserve themselves from the corruptions, superstitions, heresies, and idolatries of the visible Church ; and in these men the catholic Church is preserved from a total failure.

Indeed this is the only difference between Protestant divines in this matter : they all agree, that the catholic Church shall not fail, because Christ has promised it shall not fail, that the

gates of hell shall not prevail against it ; but some doubt whether there shall be always a true visible organized Church in the world. They agree that there shall be always a visible society of Christians in the world, who shall profess the whole Christian faith, and administer the true Christian sacraments, but they differ whether such a Church may be called a true Christian Church, if together with the true Christian faith and sacraments, they set up an Antichristian hierarchy, and impose an Antichristian faith and worship. Those who affirm that such a Church is a true Christian Church, do consequently teach that the true Church shall be always visible, though it may be corrupt even to the degree of antichristianism ; those who affirm that such a corrupt Church is not a true Church, do also consequently affirm that the true Church may be sometimes invisible, and consist only of such private Christians as preserve themselves from those corruptions which unchurch the visible Church : I may have occasion to consider this more hereafter, all that I observe at present is, that this does not alter the case as to the indefectibility of the Church ; for while there is a visible society professing the Christian faith, and administering the Christian sacraments, the catholic Church may subsist in an invisible and unorganized number of Christians, who profess the true faith without such corrupt and antichristian mixtures. Were the catholic Church an organical body, then indeed it must be always visible, and the Church would fail if ever it became invisible ; but if the catholic Church be an unorganized body of Christians, who are united only in Christ, it is possible that it may be unknown and invisible, as great numbers of private Christians may be, and yet the Church not fail.

Now this shews the weakness and fallacy of several arguments used by the Church of Rome. As 1. That the perpetual visibility of the Roman Church proves it to be that indefectible Church of which our Saviour promised, “that the gates of hell should not prevail against it.” A promise which all men grant our Saviour made to the catholic Church, not to any particular Church, that is, to the whole company of Christians, that there should never want a succession of true believers in the world, not to any particular organized Church, or body of Christians, such as the Church of Rome is. And therefore the indefectibility of the Church cannot prove that it shall be always visible, and then the uninterrupted visibility of any Church cannot prove that it is indefectible ; for if the inde-

fectible Church may be sometimes invisible, then that visible Church may not be always indefectible; when the indefectible Church is invisible, to be sure that Church, which at that time is visible, is not the indefectible Church; and thus I am sure it may be, whether it has been or not; but if it may be, the argument is naught.

2. And so is that argument to prove the Church to be infallible, because it is indefectible. That it cannot err, because it never shall so grievously err as to cease to be a Church. The indefectibility of the Church, as you have already heard, does not necessarily prove that there shall be any one visible organized Church which shall never fail; for the Church does not fail while there are any true Christians in the world, it may be preserved in a number of single and concealed Christians, who are neither known to one another, nor much less to the world. And therefore if indefectibility proves infallibility, it proves only that there shall be some private infallible Christians, not that there is any visible infallible Church. For it can prove only those to be infallible who are indefectible; and therefore since it does not necessarily prove that any visible organized Church shall be indefectible, it cannot prove any such Church to be infallible neither. The infallibility of private Christians the Church of Rome will not allow; and yet if indefectibility prove infallibility, this is all the infallibility which the indefectibility of the Church can prove, that there shall always, in the greatest degeneracy of the Church, be a number of private infallible Christians, who shall continue in the true faith and worship of Christ. When our Saviour says, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church, we may consider it either as a promise, or a prophecy, or both, that there always shall be some sound and orthodox believers in the world, who in the greatest degeneracy of the Church shall be the seeds of a reformation, and a new visible resurrection of it; now I hope Christ can make good such a promise (if we consider it as a promise) without bestowing infallibility upon any Christians; for men may be orthodox Christians without being infallible; and if we consider it as a prophecy, I hope Christ can certainly foretel things which have no necessary causes, and then he can foretel that there shall never want true believers, though it is possible there might be none; that all Christians shall not err, though they are all fallible, and therefore may err; and then neither the promise nor the prophecy can prove the infallibility of any Christians: and this

is all that Protestants can mean, when they say, that the catholic Church cannot err in fundamentals; not that there is any visible society of Christians which is infallible in its definitions of fundamental doctrines, but that the catholic Church, or the whole number of Christians, shall never err fundamentally, that is, that there shall always be some true and orthodox believers in the Church.

3. Nor is it a good argument to prove any Church to be a new upstart Church, because after some time of concealment it reassumes its visibility, and appears openly in the world. The stabbing question, as the Church of Rome thinks, to the Reformed Churches, is, Where was your Church before Luther? Those who own the Church of Rome with all her corruptions to be a true Church, have a plain and easy answer to this, That the Church was before Luther, where it was afterwards; for they did not make a new Church, but only reformed that part of the old which consented to such a reformation; they profess the same faith still, have the same sacraments, and the same Christian worship, but purged from those innovations and corruptions which had deformed the visible communion of the Roman Church, which can no more make a new Church, than a man's washing off the dirt makes a new face. And I confess, I think, those who deny the visible organized Church of Rome to be a true Church, do not want a good answer neither. For during the degeneracy of that Church, the Church might subsist in those private Christians, who preserved themselves in a great measure from the corruptions of that Church, which might more easily be done before the Reformation than since; for many of their doctrines and practices were not then so peremptorily decreed by their Councils, nor so strictly imposed on the consciences of men, as the Council of Trent has since done. And there are evidences enough, that there never wanted some in all ages, who have condemned their innovations, and that profound ignorance, wherein that Church brought up honest and devout men, was the true reason why there were not more; now all these men may be reckoned the seeds of the Reformation, out of which a visible Church would spring, as soon as a new light broke in upon the world. There was no failure of the Church, though it was obscured and concealed; we may as well say, that it is a new sun which rises every morning, not that which set at night, as make a new Church of the visible resurrection of old and primitive Christianity, the profession of which was never lost, though the pro-



fessors of it were not so visible. If the true Church be indefectible and never fails, it can never be new again ; and if the indefectibility of the Church may be preserved in some private and unknown Christians, the want of a visible society of such pure and orthodox Christians, cannot prove that the Church has failed ; and then when the old Christian Church appears again with a new glory, it is ridiculous to call it new, only because for some years it has been concealed.

Thus I have considered "the true notion of the Catholic Church on earth," which there is so much talk of in our disputes with the Church of Rome ; and I hope have made it appear how little service this can do them.

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CHAP. II.

A BRIEF DISCOURSE

CONCERNING THE NOTES OF THE CHURCH:

WITH

SOME REFLECTIONS ON CARDINAL BELLARMINÉ'S NOTES.

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IF Cardinal Bellarmine had not told us, that this is a most profitable controversy,\* I should very much have wondered at that pains which he and so many other of their great divines have taken, to find out the Notes of the Church. For is not the catholic Church visible? And if we can see which is this Church, what need we guess at it by marks and signs? And that by such marks and signs too as are matter of dispute themselves! Cannot we distinguish between the Christian Church, and a Turkish mosque, or Jewish synagogue, or Pagan temple? Cannot we, without all this ado, distinguish a Christian from a Turk, or a Jew, or a Pagan? And it will be as easy to find out a Christian Church, as it is to find out Christians; for a Christian Church is nothing else but a society of Christians united under Christian pastors, for the worship of Christ; and wherever we find such a society as this, there is a Christian Church, and all such particular or national Churches all the world over, make up the whole Christian Church, or the universal Church of Christ.

But this will not do the Cardinal's business: though the Christian Church is visible enough, yet not such a Church as he wants. For since there are a great many Christian Churches in the world, as the Greek, the Arminian, the Abyssinian, the Roman Church, he would find out which of these Churches is the catholic Church; which after all their shuffles they can make no better sense of, than which of the parts is the whole.

Since there are many unhappy disputes amongst Christians, the use of Notes is to find out an infallible Church, which must

\* Controv. tom. 2. l. 4. de Notis Ecclesiæ. [De Controv. vol. 2. col. 159. Par. 1608.]

by an indisputable authority dictate to all other Churches what they must believe and what they must practise ; and to bring all other Churches into subjection, they must find out a Church, out of whose communion there is no pardon of sin, no eternal life to be had. That is, in short, the use of notes is to prove the Church of Rome to be the only catholic Church, the only infallible oracle of faith, and final judge of controversies ; and that the promises of pardon of sin, and eternal life, are made only to the Church of Rome, and to those other Churches which are in subjection to her. Thus Bellarmine unriddles this matter, that the usefulness of this inquiry after the notes of the true Church, is, because in the true Church only there is the true faith, the true remission of sins, the true hope of eternal salvation ;\* which is certainly true, that all this is to be had only in the true Church of Christ. For there can be no true Church without the true faith ; and no remission of sins, nor hope of salvation out of the true Church. But then all the Churches in the world, which profess the true faith of Christ, are such true Churches. But this will not do the business neither ; for it is not enough to know that every true Church professes the true faith ; but we must find out such a Church as cannot err in the faith, and has authority to correct the faith of all other Churches ; and we must allow the pardon of sin and eternal life to be had in no other Church but this ; which is the only thing which can make such a Church the mistress of all other Churches ; and this Church must be the Church of Rome, or else the Cardinal is undone with all his notes and marks of the Church.

The observing this, gives us the true state of the controversy ; which is not, what it is which makes a Church a true Church ; which is necessary for all Christians to know, that they may take care that nothing be wanting in their communion which is essential to a true Church ; which is the only use of notes that I know of. But the dispute is, how among all the divisions of Christendom, we may find out that only true Church, which is the mistress of all other Churches, the only infallible guide in matters of faith, and to which alone the promises of pardon and salvation are made ; and by some notes and characters of such a Church, to prove that the Church of Rome

\* Omnes enim confitentur in sola vera Ecclesia esse veram fidem, veram peccatorum remissionem, veram spem salutis æternæ. Bel. de Notis Ecclesiæ, cap. 1. [Ibid.]

is that Church. The first of these is what the Protestants intend in those notes they give of the true Church; to shew what it is which is essential to the being and constitution of a Christian Church; for that, and none else, is a true Church, which has all things essential to a true Church. The second is, what the Papists intend by their notes of a Church, to prove that the Church of Rome is the only true Church: and some brief remarks upon both these ways, will abundantly serve for an introduction to a more particular examination of Cardinal Bellarmine's "Notes of the Church," which is the only design of these papers.

It is no wonder that Papists and Protestants differ so much about the notes of the true Church, since the questions, which each of them intend to answer by their several notes, so vastly differ. When you ask a Protestant, what are the notes of a true Church? He answers to that question, what it is which is essential to a true Church; or what it is which makes a Church a true Church; that is, what a true Church is; and examines the truth of his Church by the essential marks and properties of a Church. When you ask a Papist for notes of a true Church, he answers to that question, Which is a true Church? and thinks to point you out to a true Church by some external marks and signs, without ever inquiring what it is which is essential to a Church; and this he must of necessity do, according to his principles, for he can know nothing of religion, till he has found the Church from which he must learn every thing else. Let us consider, then, which of these is most reasonable.

First, to begin with the Protestant way of finding out the Church by the essential properties of a true Church: such as the profession of the true Christian faith, and the Christian sacraments rightly and duly administered by persons rightly ordained, according to the institution of our Saviour, and the apostolical practice. This is essential to a true Church; for there can be no true Christian Church without the true Christian faith and Christian sacraments, which cannot be rightly administered but by church-officers rightly and duly ordained. The regular exercise of discipline is not necessary to the being of the Church, but to the purity and good government of it.

This is the sum of what the Protestants allege for the notes of the true Church, and these are as infallible notes of a true Church, as human nature is of a man; for they are the essential principles of it. By this every man may know whether



he be a member of a true Church or not ; for where this is, there is a true Church ; where this is not, there is no true Church, whatever other marks of a Church there be. And I know no other use of notes, but to find out what we seek for.

In answer to such notes as these, Cardinal Bellarmine objects three things :—

1. That notes, whereby we will distinguish things, must not be common to other things, but proper and peculiar to that of which it is a note. As if you would describe a man to me, whom I never saw, so as that I may know him when I meet him ; it is not enough to say, that he has two hands, or two eyes, &c., because this is common to all men. And this, he says, is the fault of these notes : for, as for the sincere preaching of the truth, or the profession of the true Christian faith, this is common to all sects, at least in their own opinion ; and the same may be said of the sacraments. All sects and professions of Christians, either have the true faith and sacraments, or at least think that they have so ; and therefore these marks cannot visibly distinguish the true Church from any other sect of Christians.

Now, I must confess, these notes, as he well observes, are common to all Christian Churches, and were intended to be so ; and if this does not answer his design, we cannot help it. The Protestant Churches do not desire to confine the notes of the Church to their own private communions, but are very glad, if all the Churches in the world be as true Churches as themselves. The whole catholic Church, which consists of a great many particular diocesan or national Churches, has the same nature ; and when the whole consists of univocal parts, every part must have the same nature with the whole ; and therefore, as he who would describe a man, must describe him by such characters as fit all mankind, so he who gives the essential characters of a Church must give such notes as fit all true Churches in the world. This, indeed, does not fit the Church of Rome, to make it the only catholic and the only true Church, nor do we intend it should ; but it fits all true Churches, wherever they are, and that is much better.

To answer then his argument : When we give notes which belong to a whole species, as we must do when we give the notes of a true Christian Church (there being a great many true Churches in the world, which make up the catholic or universal Church), we must give such notes as belong to the

whole kind; that is, to all true Christian Churches. And though these notes are common, indeed, to all true Christian Churches, yet they are proper and peculiar to a true Christian Church, as the essential properties of a man are common to all men, but proper to mankind: and this is necessary to make them true notes, for such notes of a true Church as do not fit all true Churches, cannot be true notes.

As for what the Cardinal urges, "That all sects of Christians think themselves to have the true faith and true sacraments," I am apt to think they do; but what then? If they have not the true faith and true sacraments, they are not true Churches, whatever they think of it; and yet the true faith and true sacraments are certain notes of a true Church. A purchase upon a bad title, which a man thinks a good one, is not a good estate; but yet a purchase upon a title, which is not only thought to be, but is a good one, is a good estate. All that can be said in this case is, that men can be no more certain that they have a true Church, than they are that they have a true faith and true sacraments, and this I readily grant. But as men's mistake in this matter does not prove that there is no true faith, nor true sacraments, so neither does it prove that a true faith and true sacraments are not notes of the true Church.

2. The Cardinal's second objection is, "That the notes of anything must be more known than the thing itself;" which we readily grant. Now, says he, "Which is the true Church is more knowable than which is the true faith:" and this we deny, and that for a very plain reason, because the true Church cannot be known without knowing the true faith: for no Church is a true Church which does not profess the true faith. We may as well say that we can know a horse, without knowing what the shape and figure of a horse is, which distinguishes it from all other creatures, as that we can know a Christian Church, without knowing what the Christian faith is, which distinguishes it from all other Churches: or, we may as well say, that we can know anything without knowing what it is, since the very essence of a true Church consists in the true faith, which therefore must be first known before we can know the true Church.

But the Cardinal urges, "That we cannot know what true Scripture is, nor what is the true interpretation of Scripture, but from the Church; and therefore we must know the Church before we can know the true faith." As for the first, I readily

grant, that at this distance from the writing the books of the New Testament, there is no way to assure us, that they were written by the Apostles, or Apostolical men, and owned for inspired writings, but the testimony of the Church in all ages. But herein we do not consider them as a Church, but as credible witnesses. Whether there can be any such thing as a Church or not, we can know only by the Scriptures: but without knowing whether there be a Church or not, if we know that for so many hundred years these books have been owned to be written by such men, and have been received from the Apostles' days till now by all who call themselves Christians, this is as good an historical proof as we can have for anything; and it is the authority of an uninterrupted tradition, not the authority of a Church, considered as a Church, which moves us to believe them: for, setting aside the authority of tradition, how can the authority of a company of men, who call themselves the Church, before I know whether there be any Church, move me to believe anything which was done sixteen hundred years ago? But there is a company of men in the world, and have been successively for sixteen hundred years (whether they be a Church or not, is nothing to this question), who assure me, that these books, which we call the Scriptures, were written by such inspired men, and contain a faithful account of what Christ did, and taught, and suffered; and therefore I believe such books; and from them I learn what that true faith is which makes a true Christian Church.

As for the true interpretation of Scripture, that we cannot understand what it is without the Church, this I also deny. The Scriptures are very intelligible to honest and diligent readers, in all things necessary to salvation; and if they be not, I desire to know how we shall find out the Church; for certainly the Church has no charter but what is in the Scripture: and then, if we must believe the Church before we can believe or understand the Scriptures, we must believe the Church before we can possibly know whether there be a Church or not. If we prove the Church by the Scripture, we must believe and understand the Scripture before we can know the Church. If we believe and understand the Scriptures upon the authority and interpretation of the Church, considered as a Church, then we must know the Church before the Scripture. The Scripture cannot be known without the Church, nor the Church without the Scripture, and yet one of them must be known first; yet neither of them can be known

first, according to these principles, which is such an absurdity, as all the art of the world can never palliate.

3. The Cardinal's third objection is, "That the true notes of the Church must be inseparable from it;" whereas the Churches of Corinth and Galatia did not always teach true doctrine, some of the Church of Corinth denying the resurrection, and the Galatians warping towards Judaism; and the Church of Corinth being guilty of great miscarriages in receiving the Lord's Supper; and yet were owned for true Churches by the Apostles. An argument which much became the Cardinal to use, it being the best evidence I know of for the Church of Rome being a true Church, that every corruption in faith and sacraments do not unchurch; but how this proves that true faith and true sacraments are not an essential note and character of a true Church, I cannot guess. I would desire any one to tell me for him, whether a corrupt faith and false sacraments be the notes of a true Church, or whether it be no matter as to the nature of a Church, what our faith and sacraments are.

Secondly, Let us now consider the Cardinal's way, by some certain marks and notes, to find out which is the true Church, before we know what a true Church is. To pick out of all the Churches in the world one Church, which we must own for the only true Church, and reject all other Churches which do not subject themselves to this one Church. To find out such a Church, on whose authority we must rely for the whole Christian faith, and in whose communion only pardon of sin is to be had. That this is the use of notes in the Church of Rome, I have already shewn you; and truly they are very pretty things to be proved by notes; as to consider them particularly.

1. To find out which is the true Church, before we know what a true Church is. This, methinks, is not a natural way of inquiry, but is like seeking for we know not what. There are two inquiries in order of nature before "which is the true Church," *viz.* whether there be a true Church or not, and what it is. The first of these the Cardinal takes for granted, that there is a Church; but I wont take it for granted, but desire these note-makers to give me some notes to prove that there is a Church. There is indeed a great deal of talk and noise in the world about a Church, but that is no proof that there is a Church; and yet it is not a self-evident proposition, that there is a Church, and therefore it must be proved.



Now that there is a Church, must be proved by notes, as well as which is this true Church, or else the whole design of notes is lost, and I would gladly see those notes, which prove that there is a Church, before we know what a Church is. To understand the mystery of this, we must briefly consider the reason and use of notes in the Church of Rome, according to the Popish resolution of faith into the authority of the Church. The first thing we must know is, which is the true Church, for we must receive the Scriptures, and the interpretation of them, and the whole Christian faith and worship from the Church, and therefore can know nothing of religion till we have found the Church. The use then of notes is to find out the Church before, and without the Scriptures; for if they admit of a Scripture proof, they must allow that we can know and understand the Scriptures without the authority or interpretation of the Church, which undermines the very foundation of Popery. Now I first desire to know how they will prove that there is a Church without the Scripture? That, you will say, is visible itself, for we see a Christian Church in the world; but what is it I see? I see a company of men who call themselves a Church, and this is all that I can see; and is this seeing a Church? A Church must have a divine original and institution; and therefore there is no seeing a Church without seeing its charter, for there can be no other note or mark of the being of a Church but the institution of it.

And this proves that we cannot know that there is a Church, without knowing in some measure what this Church is, for the charter which founds the Church must declare the nature and constitution of it, what its faith and worship and laws and privileges are. But now these essential characters of a Church must not be reckoned by the Romanists among the notes of a Church, for then we must find out the true Church by the true faith and the true worship; not the true faith by the true Church, which destroys Popery.

Hence it is, that these note-makers never attempt to give us any notes, whereby we shall know that there is a Church, or what this Church is, for there are no notes of these, but such as they dare not give, *viz.* "The authority of the Scriptures, and every man's private judgment of the sense and the interpretation of them;" for, at least till we have found a Church, we must judge for ourselves, and then the authority of the Church comes too late; for we must first judge upon the whole of religion, if we must find out a true Church by the true faith,

before we can know the true Church ; and we cannot rely on her authority, before we know her, and therefore they take it for granted that there is a Church, which they can never prove in their way, and attempt to give some notes whereby to know which is the Church, and then learn what the Church is, from the Church itself, which is like giving marks whereby to know an unicorn, before I know whether there be an unicorn or not, or what it is.

2. Another blunder, in this dispute about notes, is, that they give us notes whereby to find out the true catholic Church, before we know what a particular Church is. For all Bellarmine's notes are intended only for the catholic Church ; and therefore his first note is the name Catholic ; whereas the catholic Church is nothing else but all true Christian Churches in the world, united together by one common faith and worship, and such acts of communion as distinct Churches are capable of, and obliged to. Every particular Church which professes the true faith and worship of Christ, is a true Christian Church ; and the catholic Church is all the true Christian Churches in the world, which have all the same nature, and are in some sense of the same communion, so that it is as impossible to know what the catholic Church is, before we know what a particular Church is, as it is to know what the sea is, before we know what water is. Every true, single, particular Church has the whole and entire nature of a Church, and would be a true Church, though there were no other Church in the world, as the Christian Church at Jerusalem was before any other Christian Churches were planted ; and therefore there can be no other notes of a true Church, but what belong to every true particular Church, and that can be nothing but what is essential to a Church, and what all true Christian Churches in the world agree in, *viz.* the true faith and worship of Christ.

Now, so far as Bellarmine's notes belong to every true particular Church, so far we allow them, and let the Church of Rome make the best of them she can, for we doubt not to make our claim to them as good, and much better than her's ; but he has named very few such : the 6th, the agreement and consent in doctrine with the ancient and apostolic Church, which is the same with his second note concerning antiquity, which must refer to the antiquity of its doctrine ; for an ancient Church, though founded many years since, if it have innovated in doctrine, cannot plead antiquity ; and a Church

founded but yesterday, which professes the same ancient faith, may : and the 8th, the holiness of its doctrine, are the chief, if not the only notes of this nature ; and these we will stand and fall by : many of his other are not properly the notes of a true Church, any otherwise than as they are testimonies of the truth of common Christianity, which is professed by all true Churches ; and if they are notes of the Church, so every true particular Church has a share in them. Such as his 9th, the efficacy of doctrine. The 10th, the holiness of the lives of the first authors and Fathers of our religion ; and I suppose the holiness of Christ and his Apostles give testimony to the truth of common Christianity, and therefore to all Churches who profess the common faith once delivered to the saints. The 11th, the glory of miracles, which also proves the truth of Christian religion ; and I hope a little better than Popish miracles do transubstantiation. The 12th is the spirit of prophecy, which, as far as it is a good note, belongs to the religion, not to the Church. Other notes he assigns, which I doubt will prove no notes at all, as the 13th, 14th, and 15th, because they are not always true, and at best uncertain.

His 3rd and 4th notes are not notes of a Church, but God's promises made to his Church ; as of a long duration, that it shall never fail, and amplitude or extent, and multitude of believers. These promises we believe God will fulfil to his Church, but they can be no notes which is the true Church. For the first of these can never be a note till the day of judgment. That Church which shall never be destroyed is the true Church, but a bare long continuance is no mark of a true Church ; for an apostolical Church may continue by the patience and forbearance of God many hundred years, and be destroyed at last, and then this argument of a long duration is confuted. And as for amplitude and extent, that is not to distinguish one Christian Church from another, that the most numerous Church should be the truest ; but to distinguish the Christian Church from all other religions ; and then I doubt this prophecy has not received its just accomplishment yet, for though we take in all the Christian Churches in the world, and not exclude the greatest part of them, as the Church of Rome does, yet they bear but a small proportion to the rest of the world.

And now there are but three of his fifteen notes of the Church left. The first concerning the name Catholic, which makes every Church a catholic Church, which will call itself

so: though catholic does not declare what a Church is, but in what communion it is, and is no note of a true Church, unless it be first proved that they are true Churches which are in communion with each other; for if three parts in four of all the Churches in the world were very corrupt and degenerate in faith and worship, and were in one communion, this would be the most catholic communion, as catholic signifies the most general and universal; but yet the fourth part, which is sincere, would be the best and truest Church, and the catholic Church, as that signifies the communion of all orthodox and pure Churches.

His fifth note is, "The succession of bishops in the Church of Rome from the Apostles till now." This is a note of the Roman Church; and the succession of bishops in the Greek Church is as good a note of the Greek Church. And any Churches which have been later planted, who have bishops in succession from any of the Apostles or apostolical bishops, by this note are as good Churches as they. So that this is a note common to all true Churches, and therefore can do the Church of Rome no service.

His seventh note indeed is home to his purpose: "That that is the only true Church, which is united to the Bishop of Rome as to its head." If he could prove this, it must do his business without any other notes; but that will be examined hereafter. But it is like the confidence of a Jesuit, to make that the note of the Church, which is the chief subject of the dispute.

The sum is this: There can be no notes of a true Church, but what belong to all true Churches: for though there is but one catholic Church, yet there are a great many true particular Churches, which make up this catholic Church, as homogeneal parts, which have all the same nature. But now very few of the Cardinal's notes belong to all true Churches; and those which do so signify nothing to his purpose, because they are common to more Churches than the Church of Rome. And as for the catholic Church, that is known only by particular Churches; for it is nothing else but the union of all true Churches in faith and worship, and one communion, as far as distinct Churches at a great distance are capable of it: and therefore there is no other way to know which is the catholic Church, but by knowing all the true Churches in the world, which either are in actual communion with one another, or are in a disposition for it, whenever occasion is offered: for it is



impossible that all true Christian Churches all the world over, should ever join in any visible and external acts of communion : and, therefore, though we know and believe, that there is a catholic Church, because we are assured that all true Churches in the world are but one Church, the one body and spouse of Christ ; yet it is next to impossible to know all the parts of the catholic Church (without which we cannot know the whole catholic Church), because we cannot know all the particular true Churches all the world over. Nor indeed is there any need we should ; for we may certainly know, which is a truly catholic Church, without knowing the whole catholic Church. For every Church which professes the true catholic faith, and imposes only catholic terms of communion, and is ready, out of the principles of brotherly love and charity (that cement of catholic communion), to communicate with all Churches, and to receive all Churches to her communion upon these terms, is a truly catholic Church : which shews how ridiculous it is to make the catholic Church our first inquiry, and to pretend to give notes to find out the true catholic Church by, before we know what a true particular Church is. But the mystery of this will appear more in what follows.

3rdly. For another mystery of finding the true Church by notes, is to pick out of all the Christian Churches in the world one Church, which we must own for the only catholic Church ; and reject all other Churches as heretical or schismatical, or un-catholic Churches, who refuse obedience and subjection to this one catholic Church. For if this be not the intent of it, what will all the notes of the Church signify to prove, that the Church of Rome is the only true catholic Church ? And if they do not prove this, the Cardinal has lost his labour. For though the notes he assigns were the notes of a true Church, yet they may, and must belong to all other true Churches, as well as to the Church of Rome ; unless he can prove that there is but one true Church, or but one Church, which is the mistress of all other Churches, and the only principle and centre of catholic unity. And this ought to have been proved first, before he had thought of the notes of the Church.

So that there are many things to be proved here, before we are ready for the notes of the Church. They must first prove, that there is but one true Church in the world : for though we all grant, that there is but one catholic Church, yet we say, there may be, and hope, nay, more than so, know that there are many true Churches, which make up the catholic Church.

Yet before the notes of a true Church can do any service to the Church of Rome, they must prove, that there is but one true Church in the world; and then it will signify something to prove the Church of Rome to be that true Church.

They must prove also, that the catholic Church does not signify all the particular true Churches that are in the world; but some one Church, which is the fountain of catholic unity; which all other Churches are bound to submit to, and communicate with, if they will be members of the catholic Church. For though all the Churches in the world were in subjection to that Church, yet they receive their catholicism from their communion with that Church; and therefore that only is the catholic Church. It is not merely the communion of all Churches together, which makes the catholic Church; but it is the subjection of all Churches to that one catholic Church, which makes them catholic: so that they must prove, that there is one particular Church, which is the catholic Church; that is, that a part is the whole; that one particular Church is all the Churches of the world; for so the catholic Church signifies in ancient writers. This is so absurd, that some of our modern advocates for the catholic Church of Rome tell us, that they do not mean the particular diocese of Rome by the catholic Church, but all those Churches which are in communion with the Church of Rome: but suppose this, yet it is only the Church of Rome which makes all the other Churches catholic, and therefore she only is the catholic Church. And I will presently make them confess it to be so: for let us suppose, that no other Churches should submit themselves to the Church of Rome (by the Church of Rome understanding the particular diocese of Rome) would she be the catholic Church or not? If notwithstanding this she would be the catholic Church; then it is evident, that they make the particular Church of Rome the catholic Church; if she would not, then I cannot see how communion with the Church of Rome is essential to the catholic Church.

These things, I say, ought to have been proved, before the Cardinal had given us the notes of the Church; for it is a hard thing to prove by notes, that the particular Church of Rome is the only catholic Church, till it be proved, that a particular Church may be the catholic Church, or that there is one particular Church, which is the catholic Church. This he knew we all deny; and it is a ridiculous thing to think to convince us by notes, that the Church of Rome is the particular

catholic Church; when we deny that there is any such Church; and affirm that it is a contradiction to own it; as great a contradiction, as it is to say, that a particular Church is the universal Church.

4thly. But when I consider the farther design of these note-makers, to find out such a Church on whose authority we must rely for the whole Christian faith, even for the Holy Scriptures themselves, it makes me more admire, that they should think this could be done by some notes of a Church; especially by such notes as the Cardinal gives us.

For suppose he had given us the notes of a true Church, which is the utmost he can pretend to; before we can hence conclude that this Church is the infallible guide, and uncontrollable judge of controversies, we must be satisfied, that the true Church is infallible. This indeed Bellarmine attempts to prove in his Third Book of the Church; and it is not my concern at present to inquire how he proves it. But I am sure this can never be proved but by Scripture; for unless Christ have bestowed infallibility on the Church, I know not how we can prove she has it; and whether Christ have done it or not, can never be known but by the Scriptures: so that a man must believe the Scriptures, and use his own judgment to understand them, before it can be proved to him, that there is an infallible Church; and therefore those who resolve the belief of the Scriptures into the authority of the Church, cannot, without great impudence, urge the authority of the Scriptures to prove the Church's infallibility; and yet thus they all do; nay, prove their very notes of the Church from Scripture, as the Cardinal does: and think this is no circle neither, because we heretics believe the Scriptures without the authority of their Church, and therefore are willing to dispute with them out of the Scriptures. But this is a fault on our side, and when we dispute with them, whatever we do at other times, we should not believe the Scriptures, till they proved them to us their way, by the authority of their Church; and then we should quickly see what blessed work they would make of it. How they would prove their Church's infallibility, and what fine notes we should have of a Church, when we had rejected all their Scripture proofs, as we ought to do, till they have first satisfied us, that theirs is the only true infallible Church, upon whose authority we must believe the Scriptures, and everything else. I confess, I would gladly hear what notes they would give a Pagan to find out the true infallible Church by.

It is certainly a most senseless thing to resolve all our faith into the authority of the Church, as if the Church were the first object of our faith in religion ; whereas it is demonstrable, that we must know and believe most of the articles of the Christian faith, before we can know whether there be any Church or not. The order observed in the Apostles' Creed is a plain evidence of this, for all those Articles which are before the Holy Catholic Church, must in order of nature be known before it. That there is a God, who made the world ; that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried ; and descended into hell ; that he rose again the third day from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from thence shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost ; and then we may add the Holy Catholic Church, and not till then. For the Church is a society of men for the worship of God, through the faith of Jesus Christ, by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, which unites them into one mystical body : so that we must know Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before we can know what the catholic Church means. And is it not strange then, that our faith must be founded on the authority of the Church. when we must first know all the great articles of our faith, before we can know anything about a Church ? This inverts the order of our Creed, which, according to the principles of the Church of Rome, should begin thus : I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, and upon the authority of that Church, I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost : and no doubt but the Apostles, or those Apostolical men who framed the Creed, would have put it so, had they thought the whole Christian faith must be resolved into the authority of the Church.

This short discourse, I think, is enough in general concerning the Notes of the Church ; and I shall leave the particular examination of Cardinal Bellarmine's Notes to other hands, which the reader may expect to follow in their order.



## A VINDICATION OF THE BRIEF DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

THE NOTES OF THE CHURCH.

IN ANSWER TO A LATE PAMPHLET, ENTITLED,

*“The Use and great Moment of the Notes of the Church, as delivered by Cardinal Bellarmine, De Notis Ecclesiæ, justified.”*

WHEN we are almost tired with grave and serious disputes, it is very comfortable to meet with a pleasant and diverting adversary, who serves instead of a Prevaricator, or *Terræ Filius*, to refresh and recruit our spirits with a scene of mirth. And though this Justifier of Bellarmine's Notes looks very demurely, and argues very logically, and seems to be in very good earnest, yet a Merry Andrew will be a Merry Andrew still, though he be dressed up in the habit of a philosopher; and therefore I must beg my reader's pardon, if I cannot forbear smiling sometimes, though to pay due respect to my adversary, and to maintain a just decorum, I will do it very gravely too.

He begins very movingly: \* “The world is come to a fine pass, when it shall as good as deny Christ's one holy catholic Church.” This is very wicked indeed! But who are these miscreants, that dare do such a thing? A company of senseless wretches, who deny Christ's Church, and yet confess, “That there is no remission of sins, or eternal salvation out of it.” Then, I suppose, they are men who do not care much for salvation, nor sense: for to deny a Church, out of which they confess there is no salvation, is to resolve to be damned; and to say, that salvation is not to be had out of the Church, and yet that Christ has no such Church, deserves damnation, as much as nonsense does. And therefore I suppose, by “as good,” he does not mean that they altogether deny it, but do something “as good,” or rather as bad as that; but what this should be, I cannot guess, unless it be to deny the Roman Catholic Church to be this one holy catholic Church of Christ, and that indeed is a very sad thing too. And “they seek to

\* The Use and great Moment of Notes, p. 1. [Lond. 1687.]

baffle those, who by prayer and guidance of God's good Spirit, search to find it out," *i. e.* they confute Bellarmine's "Notes of a Church," and that must be confessed to be a very sad thing also, and "as good as denying Christ's one holy catholic Church."

Well! Cardinal Bellarmine (after others) "hath to very good purpose lent his helping hand to shew us the city built on a hill." But it had been better he had lent us his eyes; for Protestants see with their eyes, and not with their hands; and notwithstanding his pointing to it, we cannot see what he would shew us, unless it be the Church built on seven hills.

But this is all\* "to little purpose with the obstinate, who will not agree neither what the Church is, no nor what a note may be." This is unpardonable obstinacy, that we desire the Cardinal, or any one for him, first to tell us what a true Church is, before he tells us which is the true Church; to explain the nature before he gives us the external notes and marks of a Church; which is as unreasonable as to ask what a hind and a panther is, before we ask of what colour they are, whether white or spotted; and who would think any one should be so perverse, as to ask what a note is, which our author will give us a learned definition of presently.

The Discourser had said, p. 166, "That a Church is a society of Christians united under Christian pastors for the worship of Christ, and wherever we find such a society as this, there is a Christian Church; and all such particular or national Churches all the world over, make up the whole Christian Church, or the universal Church of Christ." That is, (says the Justifier, p. 2,) "whatsoever therefore is the denomination of believers, Abyssinian or Armenian, Greek, Roman, let us add, Lutheran, Calvinist, with a wide &c., they are each of them Churches of Christ," (suppose this, of which more presently, and if we allow the Roman, they may modestly allow all the rest,) "and the Church universal is nothing else but the aggregate or *omnium gatherum*" (very elegantly!) "of all such professions." And what then? The Church universal is made up of all particular Churches. What then, do you say? Why pray, "consider, whoever thou art, good reader, the Church-catholic consisting of all nations, Jew and Gentile, and therefore primarily called Catholic" (and therefore not from their union to the Bishop of Rome, as the head of catholic unity),

\* [Ibid.] p. 2.

“had its plantation by our blessed Lord and his Apostles, in one faith and one communion, antecedently to all such divisions that now or then were made by the craft and policy of Satan.” A notable observation this! That the faith and communion of the Church was one, before it was divided: What then? “And therefore far is the universal Church from being an aggregate of all such breaches of faith and charity.” “An aggregate of breaches,” an union of divisions may possibly be as good a Church as it is sense. But though “breaches” cannot very well be “aggregated,” it is possible that two divided Churches may both belong to the one body of Christ, as quarrelling brethren may still be the children of the same father, and owned by him too, though corrected and punished for their quarrels. Churches consist of men, who are liable to mistakes and passions, and therefore may quarrel and separate from each other, while they are both united to Christ in faith and worship. For though the bishops, and pastors, and members of distinct and co-ordinate Churches ought to maintain a brotherly correspondence, and exercise all acts of communion that distant Churches are capable of with each other, upon account of that common relation they all have to Christ, in whom they are united into one body; and our common Head will exact a severe account of those who cause divisions; yet if such divisions happen as separate us from each other, but do not divide us from Christ, each Church may continue a true Church still, and belong to the one mystical body of Christ, though there may be some scandalous breaches and divisions among them. What is it then that unites any Church to Christ, but the true faith and worship of Christ? And if contending Churches may both retain the true Christian faith and worship, at least in such a degree as not to be unchurched, the external peace of the Church is broken, which is a very great crime, and will fall heavy upon the authors of it; yet if they both belong to Christ, this “aggregate of breaches, and *ominum gatherum* of professions,” as our author very wittily speaks, may be united in Christ’s mystical body. For though they fling one another out of the Church, our common Saviour may chastise their follies, but own them both, as in such a divided state of Christendom, we have great reason to hope he will.

But let us hear what our author says is the catholic Church. “It is only a comprehension of all those Churches which keep to the unity of the faith, and persist in their first undivided

estate in the bond of universal peace." By the "unity of the faith," I hope he means, that one faith, in which, as he tells us, Christ and his Apostles planted the Church; and then I doubt this will fall hard upon the Church of Rome, which rejects all other Churches who do retain this one Apostolic faith, if they disown the new articles of the Trent Creed; and the "first undivided estate" of the Church was settled in an equality and brotherly association of bishops and Churches, not in the empire of one over all the rest, and then this is more severe upon the Church of Rome than Protestants desire; for she has destroyed this first undivided state, by challenging such a supremacy as enslaves all other Churches to her, and therefore is so far from being the one catholic Church, that if this definition be true, she is no part of it. And as for "the bond of universal peace," what claim she can lay to that, let the cruel persecutions of those innocent Christians, whom she calls heretics, the excommunication of whole Churches, the deposing of princes, and all the blood that has been shed in Christendom under the banners of Holy Church, witness for her.

And thus we come to the "notion of a note or mark," which, he says, "is clear by its definition," p. 3. and therefore I hope he will give us such a definition as is self-evident, or which all mankind agree in; for a definition which the contending parties do not agree in, can clear nothing. Let us then hear his definition: "That it is a most sensible appearance in or about the subject inquired after, whereby we are led toward the knowledge of the present existence or essence of the said subject." And from hence he concludes, "It is manifest then, that a note of a thing must be extra-essential of itself, because by it, and the light from thence, we arrive to the knowledge of the essence." And he adds, "upon which grounds you see the reasonable demands of those, who challenge, first, That a distinctive mark or note must be more known than the thing notified: secondly, That a note must be in conjunction at least, in some measure proper, not common or indifferent to many singulars, much less to contraries."

Now all that I can pick out of this is, 1. That the existence or essence of things must be known by notes. 2. That such notes whereby we discover the existence or essence of things, must be extra-essential, or not belong to the essence of it. And yet, 3. That the note must not be common, but proper to the thing of which it is a note. Which are as pretty



notions as a man shall ordinarily meet with, and therefore I shall briefly examine them.

First, That the existence or essence of things must be known by notes. For if the existence and essence of things may be known without notes, this dispute about notes is to no purpose. And yet how many things are there, whose existence and essence are known without notes? Who desires any note to know the sun by? To know what light, or taste, or sounds, pain, or pleasure is? The presence of these objects, and the notice our senses give us of them, that is, the things themselves, are the only notes of themselves. The use of signs or notes, is only to discover the existence of such things as are absent, invisible, or future; but what is present and visible, exposed to the notice of sense or reason, is best known by itself, and can be rightly known no other way; and therefore since all the dispute is about marks of the Church, he ought to prove that the Church is such a society as can be known only by notes, and then it must either be absent, invisible, or future; for all other things may be known by themselves without notes.

Secondly, Especially since he will allow nothing to be a note but what is extra-essential, or does not belong to the essence of the thing; which seems to me a very extraordinary way of finding out the existence or essence of things by such notes as do not belong to their essence; and then I think they cannot prove their existence. For how can I find out any thing without knowing in some measure what it is I find? Or, how can I know what the essence of any thing is by such notes as are not essential? There are but two sorts of notes, or signs, that I know of, natural, or instituted; and they both suppose that we know the thing, and the note and sign of it, before we can find it out by signs or notes. As for natural signs, the most certain signs we have are causes and effects, but we must know both the causes and effects, before the one can be a sign of the other. Thus smoke is a sign of fire, but it is no sign of fire to any man who does not know what fire is, and that it will cause a smoke when it seizes on combustible matter, and that nothing else can cause a smoke but fire. Thus in univocal effects, the effect declares the nature of the cause; as we know, that a man had a man to his father, but then we must first know what a man is, and that a man begets in his own likeness. But this I suppose is not our author's meaning, that the notes of the Church are natural causes and effects, or

natural concomitants or adjuncts, because the Church is not a natural, but a mystical body, and therefore can have no natural notes.

Let us then consider instituted signs, and they we grant must be extra-essential ; but then there never was, and never can be, an instituted sign to discover the essence and existence of what we did not know before : the use of such signs is to distinguish places or persons, by different names, or habits, or colours, &c. or to serve instead of words, as the sound of the trumpet, or the beat of the drum, or to be for legal contracts and securities, and the like ; but instituted signs are no signs, till we know the thing of which they are signs ; which shews how ridiculous it is to talk of such extra-essential notes, as shall discover the existence and essence of things which we knew not before ; for if we must first know the Church, before we can find it out by notes, these extra-essential notes may be spared. To be sure this shews how far this definition of a note is from being clear, since it does not suit any kind of notes which mankind are acquainted with ; and if the notes of the Church are a peculiar sort of notes by themselves, he should not have appealed to the common notion and definition of signs and notes, because there are no other notes like them.

Thirdly, He adds, that these notes must not be common to other things, but proper to the thing of which it is a note. Now I defy him to shew any such extra-essential notes in nature, which are not common to other things : for what in logic we call *propria*, do immediately result from the nature of things, and therefore are not extra-essential notes, nay, are no notes at all to find out the essence or existence of things by ; for we must first know what the nature and essence of things is, before we can know their essential properties ; and as for inseparable accidents, how inseparable soever they are from such a thing, yet they may be common to other things, and then by his own rule cannot be notes.

But this is not the case, as I observed before, for the Church is not a natural, but a mystical body, and therefore its nature depends upon its institution ; and though in natural beings we may distinguish between the essence and essential properties, yet where institution alone is nature, whatever is made proper, necessary, and inseparable by institution, is of the nature of it ; and there is no distinction, that I know of, between the essence and essential properties. In natural beings, we call that the nature, and form, and essence of the thing, by which

every thing is what it is, and without which it would cease to be that kind of being which now it is, as rationality is of the essence of a man, for man is a reasonable creature, and without a principle of reason he cannot be a man. Now in allusion to natural beings, we apply the same terms to matters of institution, and call that the nature and essence of a Church, without which, according to the laws of its institution, it would not be a Church. And therefore whatever by institution is so proper, peculiar to, and inseparable from a Church, that without it it cannot be a Church, is of the nature and essence of the Church, and not an extra-essential property, which indeed is nonsense. The observing this one distinction between nature and institution, will confound this whole doctrine of the notes of the Church. For,

1. There can be no notes of an institution but the institution itself: notes must signify either by nature or institution: there can be no natural notes of an institution, which is not the effect of nature, but of the Divine will; and, therefore, if there be any, they must be instituted notes, that is, the institution of the Church must be the mark or note whereby to know it; unless we will say, that there must be a second institution to be the notes of the first; and by the same reason there must be a third to be the notes of the second, and there will be no place to stop at, unless we stop at the first institution, which needs no other notes to prove itself by.

2. That in matters of institution, there is no distinction between nature and properties. In natural beings indeed there is a distinction between the nature and properties of things, because there are some properties, which by a natural casualty spring from nature, as risibility from rationality. But now in matters of institution, one part of the institution is not the natural cause of the other, but the whole institution and every part of it immediately depends upon the will and pleasure of God: and therefore there can be no extra-essential properties of a Church, but whatever is proper and inseparable by a Divine institution, is the essence of the Church; for it has no other nature and essence but its institution.

3. Hence it evidently follows, that there can be no extra-essential notes of a Church: that nothing can be a note of a Church, but what is essential to it by institution; for whatever institution makes proper and necessary, it makes essential. I confess, this is a very improper way of speaking, to call the nature and essence of any thing the note of it; for a note or

sign ought to be different and distinct from the thing shewn or signified by it; and thus we ought roundly to deny, that there are any notes of a Church, or that the Church can be found by notes; but the Protestants, in compliance with the Popish way of speaking, called that the notes of the Church, which is not properly notes and signs, but the rule and standard of the Church, by which all societies of men, which pretend to be Christian Churches, are to be tried. And it is certain there can be no other rule or standard of the Church, but its institution, as to faith, and worship, and government. Common sense will tell us, that there is no way to try an instituted society, but by the rules of its institution: that Church which conforms to the original rule and standard of its institution, is a true Church, and every Church is more or less corrupt, as it varies from it: and here we ought to fix the controversy, that the Church is not to be found out by notes, but to be tried by the rule of its institution; and then farewell to Cardinal Bellarmine's notes, which, I believe, he himself, though a Jesuit, would not have had confidence to say, that they belonged to the institution of a Church.

In the next place he says, "I have reckoned up the Cardinal's notes, now here, now there, piecemeal, but durst not let them pass by in their majestic train, lest the reader, with Sheba's queen, should be dazzled at the glory, transported as she was, that there was no life in her." If rhetoric would do the business, we were certainly undone, and should have no more life left than the Queen of Sheba: but the truth is, the Cardinal's notes may possibly lose something of their majesty when they are shewn by hereties, and there is no help for that: but as for their train, to supply the defects of the Discourser, they have been since shewn in very good order, and we live still: but whether they be triumphant notes still of the Church-militant, as he calls them, is somewhat doubtful; and indeed it seems somewhat unreasonable that the notes should be triumphant, while the Church is militant; though triumph it seems they do over some slavish and servile minds; but their triumph would be very short, were not the Church so militant as it is.

But as if there were some charm in this majestic train, nothing will serve him but to reckon them up in their order; and I must confess, he has given such a new grace and majesty to them, that I believe Bellarmine himself could not know them again.

1st. "The name Catholic, how sacred to all those, who own



any of the three Creeds, really and veritably!" O, how sacred indeed! For heretics themselves own and challenge the name.

2dly. "Its antiquity, how indubitable, and above all suspicion of novelty!" Yes, yes; antiquity is not novelty, but a pretence to antiquity may: for how old is the Council of Trent? which is the true antiquity of many Popish articles of faith.

3dly. "Perpetual duration, out-lasting all earthly empires and kingdoms." For it plucks them down as fast as it can.

4thly. "Amplitude; being a great body according to prophecy." But not so big as Paganism yet.

5thly. "Succession apostolical, the very Jews confessing it:" as they do transubstantiation. "How strong, invincible, clear, and undeniable by gainsayers!" Then I suppose it has no gainsayers, if they do not deny it.

6thly. "Primitive consent, how great and how manifest to those good men who inquire!" Yea, how great indeed! for nobody can find it but the Vicar of Putney. "Witness the multitudes that return to the Catholic Church upon that account." Monsieur de Meaux's French converts, I suppose, who never heard of the dragoons.

7thly. "Intimate union with their Head, Christ, and with one another:" but Bellarmine's visible head of unity is the Pope, not Christ; so that this is a new note, and it seems the Church's union with Christ is extra-essential also, or else it could be no note.

8thly. "Sanctity of doctrine, as revealed by God, in whom is light, and no darkness at all." In teaching men to break faith with heretics; to depose heretical princes, and absolve their subjects from their oaths of allegiance, and arm them against their liege lord; to prefer the celibacy of priests (though the manifest cause of so many adulteries and fornications) as a more holy state than matrimony; and such like doctrines, wherein is darkness, but no light at all.

9thly. "Efficacy upon infidels." Witness the Spanish converts in the golden Indies. But why not upon heretics as well as infidels? I fear the conversions in England are so slow, that he dares not yet make that a mark of the Church.

10thly. "The holiness of the Fathers; whose lives we wish to be legends (though unquestionably true), when we see how far they have outdone us." Ay! that makes heretics call them legends.

11thly. "The glory of miracles, which a man would be wary of contradicting, for fear of blasphemy and sinning against

the Holy Ghost :” especially when they are such miracles as nobody ever saw, but the monk who relates them, or miracles to prove both parts of a contradiction to be true ; as, for instance, that the Virgin Mary was, and was not conceived in original sin. But if ever they had suffered poor Jetzer’s fate, they would rather hereafter believe, than feel such miracles. “ Still continued, and denied by none but sceptics, in dispossession of devils.” I suppose he means the boy of Bilson, and curing the *struma*, the king’s evil ; but this is a Protestant as well as a Popish miracle, and is a better proof that the king, than that the Pope, is the head of the Church.

12thly. “ The gift of prophecy.” Witness the Maid of Kent. “ To say nothing concerning the confession of adversaries, and unhappy exit of the Church’s enemies.” Which may very well be spared ; for there have been confessions and unhappy exits on both sides. Though Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth, and James I. were no examples of such unhappy exits. “ These—these are the notes, which, like a bill in Parliament, deserve a second reading,” and then to be thrown out, though I hope they will never come in there.

The way being thus prepared, the court sat, and the jury of notes empannelled, which I suppose is the reason why he calls but twelve of Bellarmine’s fifteen, the rest being supernumeraries, the Discourser is summoned to make his appearance. “ Enter Discourser.”\* Which, I can assure you, put him into a fright on the sudden, fearing it might be the inquisition ; but he recollected himself, and thus began his plea :—

“ Is not the Catholic Church visible ? And if we can see which is the Church, what need we guess at it by marks and signs ? And that by such marks and signs, too, as are matter of dispute themselves ! † Cannot we distinguish between the Christian Church, and a Turkish mosque, and a Jewish synagogue ? Cannot we, without all this ado, distinguish a Christian from a Turk, or a Jew, or a Pagan ? And it will be as easy to find out a Christian Church, as it will be to find out Christians.” And what now is the hurt of this ? Oh ! says the Justifier, “ What spirit is that which envies the Christian the felicity of finding the true Church, and casts an evil eye upon the notes conducing to it, let any Christian judge.” A very evil spirit, doubtless ! But does the Discourser do this ? Who says that the Church is visible, and may be known with-

\* [The Use and great Moment of Notes,] p. 5.

† Disc., p. 166.

out disputable notes. For notes are only to discover things absent and invisible, but what is visible is best known by itself. "Yes; for whereas he pretends it is visible (besides that he flatly denies it after, p. 173). Nay, say I, not among counterfeits: is it visible at sea which is the royal navy, when the enemy puts up the English colours?"

First, then, let us reconcile the Discourser with himself. He asks, whether the Church be not visible? and therein appeals to the confession of his adversaries, that the Church is visible, and wonders what need there is of notes, of disputable notes, to find out a visible Church, in p. 173. He desires to know, "How they will prove that there is a Church without the Scripture?" He answers for them, "That the Church is visible, for we see a Christian Church in the world." But, says he, "What is it I see? I see a company of men, who call themselves a Church, and this is all that I can see: and is this seeing a Church? A Church must have a divine original and institution, and therefore there is no seeing a Church without seeing its charter;" and is this to deny the visibility of the Church, because it cannot be seen or known without its charter, when its charter is as visible as the society which calls itself the Church? And surely that Church is visible enough, whose society and charter are both visible, though the Church cannot be known without its charter.

But now the Answerer will not allow the Church to be visible among counterfeits, and then it has not been visible these hundred years at least; and then what becomes of Bel-larmine's notes, which are none, if the Church be not visible, for they are notes not of an invisible, but of a visible Church. But the comparison whereby he proves this, is an eternal confutation of such extra-essential notes. "Is it visible at sea which is the royal navy, when the enemy puts up the English colours?" Which shews how fallible notes are; for colours are notes of the royal navy, and these may deceive us: but if you go aboard, and see the ships and the company, and their commissions, you cannot be mistaken. The natures of things cannot be counterfeited, but notes may.

The Discourser says, "A Christian Church is nothing else but a society of Christians united under Christian pastors, for the worship of Christ." This the Justifier thinks a very slight way of speaking, "nothing else but!" And if he does not understand English, I cannot help that. But "Christian Pastors for a need will take in presbyters who renounce episcopacy, nay,

congregational who renounce presbytery:" it takes in, indeed, all Christian pastors, be they what they will. Whether Presbyterian and Independent ministers are Christian pastors, the Discourser was not concerned to determine; for he did not undertake to tell in particular, which are the true Christian Churches, but what is the general notion of a Christian Church; who are true pastors, but that the union of Christians under true Christian pastors makes a Church: though the *pastores ecclesiae*, in the ancient language, signified only bishops, who had the care of the flock, and the government of the inferior presbyters. Thus the worship of Christ, he says, may signify with Liturgy, or without it, with the Apostles' Creed, or without it, &c.; and so it may, if both with and without be the true worship of Christ. What a long definition must the Discourser have given of a Christian Church, had he been directed by this author, and stated all the controversies about episcopacy and presbytery, and the several kinds and modes of worship in his definition, which, when he had done it, had been nothing at all to his purpose.

The Discourser proceeds: "All such particular or national Churches all the world over, make up the whole Christian Church, or universal Church of Christ." "Yes," (says the Justifier, p. 6.) "and all such Churches of Christ (if they could meet) would be like the men in the market-place, one crying out one thing, and another another, and no authority could send them home peaceably to their dwellings." I confess I am of another mind, that could all the Churches in the world meet, how much soever they differ at a distance, they would agree better before they parted; and this, I think, all those should believe, who have any reverence for General Councils, which certainly such a meeting as this would be in a proper sense.

Well! But there is "schism lies in the word National Church." How so, good sir? "as if nations here were at their own disposal." And pray, why may not all the Churches in a nation unite into one national communion? And how is this a schism, if they maintain brotherly union with other Christian Churches? "Or as if Christ begged leave of the potentates of the earth to plant his truth among them." Why so? Cannot there be a national Church without Christ's begging leave of potentates to plant his Gospel among them? Suppose there be Churches planted in a nation without the leave of the potentates, may not all these Churches unite into a national com-



munion without the leave of potentates too ; and is not such a national union of Churches a national Church ? Suppose princes voluntarily submit their sceptres to Christ, and encourage and protect the Christian Churches in their dominions, and unite them all into one national Church ; is there any need of Christ's asking leave of such potentates, who willingly devote themselves to his service ? But he says, "The greater mistake is, that these Churches, all put together, make up the universal Church of Christ." But are not all the Churches the universal Church ? What then is the universal Church but all ? Yes, he says, "Universal enough, I confess, but where is the unity ?" Why, is it impossible that all Churches should be united in one communion ? If it be, then unity is not necessary, or the universal Church does not include all Churches ; if it be not, then all Churches may be the universal, the one catholic Church of Christ. "We," says he, "look for unity, they shew us multitude and division." Is multitude and division the same thing ? or is unity inconsistent with multitude ? How then could the Churches of Jerusalem, of Antioch, of Corinth, of Ephesus, of Rome, be one Church ? "We desire unity, they shew us universality : " as if there could not be unity in universality. I wish this author would first learn grammar and logic, or, which I fear is harder to teach him, common sense, before he pretends again to dispute in divinity ; but now we have him, we must make the best of him we can.

And here the Answerer spends several pages in proving that the Church must be one, which nobody that I know of denies, and which he may find truly stated in answer to Cardinal Bellarmine's Seventh Note. But what is this to the Discourser, who was not concerned to state this point ? He gives such a definition of a Church, as belongs to all true particular Churches, as every man ought to do, who gives the definition of a Church ; for a particular Church has the entire nature and essence of a Church ; and there can be no true definition of a Church, but what belongs to a particular Church. He says, indeed, that the universal Church consists of all true particular Churches ; and so most certainly it does. No, says the Answerer, all particular Churches are not at unity, and therefore they cannot be the one Catholic or universal Church. But suppose this, is there any other notion of the universal Church, but that it is made up of all true particular Churches ? which is all that the Discourser asserted, without considering how all particular Churches must be united to make the one

catholic Church, which was nothing to his purpose. In such a divided state of Christendom as this, mere external unity and communion cannot be the mark of a true Church, because all Churches are divided from each other. If we are not at unity with the Church of Rome, no more is the Church of Rome at unity with us; and if mere unity be the mark of the true Church, neither part of the division can pretend to it. And therefore either some Churches may be true Churches, which are not at unity with all others, or there is no true Church in the world. And therefore though Cardinal Bellarmine makes unity the mark of a true Church, yet not the unity of all Churches with each other; for he knew there was no such thing in his days in the world, and I fear is not likely to be again in haste; but the unity of Churches to the Bishop of Rome, who is the visible head of the Church: and thus the catholic Church signifies all those Churches which are united to the Bishop of Rome, as the centre of unity. But this is such an unity as the Scripture says nothing of, and which Protestants disown, and which this Answerer has not said one word to prove; for this is the unity of subjection, not the unity of love and charity, which Christ and his Apostles so vehemently press us to. Now, if the unity of the catholic Church does not consist in subjection to a visible head, and all other external communion is broken and divided, we must content ourselves to know, what it is that makes a particular national Church, a true, sound, and pure Church; for whatever divisions there are in the world, every true Church is part of Christ's one catholic Church. And whatever unity there be among other Churches, if they be not true Churches, they are no parts of Christ's catholic Church. And this was all the Discourser intended, or was obliged to in pursuit of his design.

And thus I might pass over what he talks about Church-unity, but that he has some very peculiar marks which are worth our notice.

He says, p. 7. "Protestants salve the unity of the Church, mainly because Christendom is divided and separated from heathenism" (which I wish heartily all Christendom perfectly were) "not considering so much the unity with itself." But pray who told him that Protestants do not place the unity of the Church in unity, but in separation? All true Christian Churches are united in the most essential things: they have "one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," and this makes them one body, animated by the

same Holy Spirit which dwells in the whole Christian Church, Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6. But still they are not one entire communion, but divide and separate from each other: this we will grant is a very great fault, but yet if they communicate in such things as make one Church, whatever their other divisions are, they are one Church still; their quarrels and divisions may hurt themselves, but cannot destroy the unity of the Church, for the Church is one body, not merely by the unity and agreement of Christians amongst themselves, but by the appointment and institution of Christ, who has made all those that profess the true faith, and are united in the same sacraments, to belong to the same body, to be his one body. And therefore Christians are never exhorted to be one body; for that they are if they be Christians, as the Apostle expressly asserts, that Christians are but one body; but they are exhorted to live in unity and concord, because they are but one body: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love: endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit"\*——Because there is but "one body and one Spirit," therefore they must "endeavour to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Which supposes the Christian Church to be one body by institution, though the external peace of the Church be broken by schisms and factions; because our obligation to preserve the peace of the Church, and the unity of ecclesiastical communion, results from this unity of body, which makes schism a very great evil, and very destructive to men's souls, as all other vices are; but the Church, which has but one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one Father of all, is but one Church still, though Christians quarrel with each other. Thus St. Paul asserts, "That as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body being many, are one body, so also is Christ."† But how do all Christians come to be one body in Christ? That he answers, "for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body——and have been made to drink into one Spirit." And from hence he shews, what tenderness all Christians ought to express for each other, as being members of each other: ver. 25, "That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should

\* Eph. iv. 1, 2, 3.

† 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, &amp;c.

have the same care one for another." But suppose Christians have not this mutual care one of another, do they cease to be members of the same body? No such matter; these quarrels between the members of the same body are very unnatural, but they are the same body still. Ver. 15, 16: "If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?" That is, though the members of the same body, out of discontent, and envy, and emulation, should separate from each other, and deny that they belong to the same body, yet they are of the body still. For we must consider, that the schisms in the Church of Corinth were occasioned by an emulation of spiritual gifts, and unless every one of them could be an eye or a hand, that is, have the most eminent gifts, they envied and divided from each other, as if they did not belong to the same body; which the Apostle tells them was as absurd as if the eye, and the hand, and the foot, should deny their relation to the same natural body, because they differed in their use and honour: however, if such a thing were possible in the natural body, they would all belong to the same body still, and so it is in the Christian Church. Which shews, that the whole Christian Church is the one mystical body of Christ, united to him by faith and baptism, notwithstanding all the divisions of Christendom.

For let us consider what the divisions of Christendom are, and whether they be such as wholly destroy the unity of the body. All the Churches in the world are divided from the Church of Rome, by disowning the authority of the Pope as the visible head of the catholic Church; but this does not destroy the unity of the body, because the unity of the body does not consist in the union of all Churches to one visible head, but in their union to Christ, who is the one Lord of the Church. Some Churches are divided in faith; not but that they agree in the necessary articles of the Christian faith (for to renounce any essential article of the Christian faith does so far unchurch), but some Churches believe only what Christ and his Apostles taught; others, together with the true faith of Christ, teach heretical doctrines, contrary to that form of sound words once delivered to the saints. And though this must of necessity divide communions, for if any Church corrupt the Christian faith with new and perverse doctrines of her own, other orthodox Christians are not bound to believe as they do;



yet both of them are true Christian Churches still; for the true faith makes a true Church, but only with this difference, that those who profess the true faith of Christ without any corrupt mixtures, are sound and orthodox Churches; other Churches are more or less pure, according to the various corruptions of their faith. And thus it is with respect to the Christian sacraments, and Christian worship; every Church which observes the institutions of our Saviour, and worships God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, is a true Church; but those Churches which corrupt this worship, though they are true are corrupt Churches; as the Church of Rome does in the worship of saints and angels, and the Virgin Mary, and the adoration of the host, and the sacrifice of the mass, &c. And in this case, though what they retain of the essentials of Christian worship, is sufficient to denominate them true Churches, yet other Churches are not bound to communicate with them in their corruptions.

The plain state, then, of the case is this. All Churches which profess the true faith and worship of Christ, though intermixed with great corruptions, belong to the one body of Christ; and to know whether any Church be a true Church, we must not so much inquire whom they communicate with, or separate from, but what their faith and worship is. That external unity is so far from being the mark of a true Church, that we may be bound not to communicate with true Churches which are corrupt, because we are not bound to communicate in a corrupt faith or worship: and that in this case the guilt of separation lies on that side where the corruptions are. And yet all the Christian Churches in the world that retain the true faith and worship of Christ, though they are divided from each other upon the disputes of faith, or worship, or discipline, are yet the one Church of Christ, as being united in the essentials of faith and worship, which by the institution of Christ makes them his one mystical body, and one Church.

Some lines after he has a very notable remark about the unity of the Church. That "the Church admits not, but casts out some, though they profess Christianity, schismatics, heretics; which being cast out, if you mark it well, she is united with herself." And I assure you it is worth marking: for if you mark it well, every conventicle in Christendom is thus united with itself. But is this the unity of the catholic Church, to cast all out of our communion who are not of our mind, and then call ourselves the catholic Church, when there

are a great many other Churches which profess the faith of Christ as truly and sincerely as we do, and are as much united among themselves as we are? Why may not the Church of England, upon this principle, call herself the catholic Church? For she has more unity in this way than the Church of Rome has. When all heretics and schismatics are cast out, she is united with herself; and if this unity be a mark of the catholic Church, all the Churches and conventicles of Christendom are the catholic Church, for they are all united with themselves. But then the difficulty will be, how all these Churches, which are united with themselves, but separated from one another, make one catholic Church? Or, which of these Churches, which are thus united with themselves (which it seems is catholic unity), is the one Church? For every one of them hath this mark of the catholic Church, that they are united with themselves.

He proves, p. 8, "That schismatics are not of the Church, one holy entire Church, from their very name, which signifies rending and tearing, not the seamless coat alone, but the blessed body of our Lord." And I must confess, the name schismatic is as good a mark of a schismatical Church, as the name catholic is of the catholic Church: but we must consider who are the godfathers, and whether they have given proper names or not. Now the Church of Rome is the common godmother, which christens herself Catholic, and all other Churches Schismatics; but whether she be infallible in giving names, ought to be considered.

But schism signifies "rending and tearing;" and yet a schismatical Church signifies a Church too, and how they are a Church without belonging to the one Church, when there is but one Church, is somewhat mysterious. And therefore schism is not tearing of a part of the Church, but one part dividing from the other in external communion, which supposes that both parts still belong to the same Church, or else the Church is not divided. For apostasy and schism are two different things; apostates cease to be of the Church, schismatics are of the Church still, though they disturb the peace of the Church and divide the external communion of it; which differ as forsaking the Church, and going out of it (which no man does, who does not renounce the faith of Christ), and raising quarrels and contentions in it, to the alienating of Christians from each other.

But, that schismatics are not of the Church, he proves "from

St. Paul's rebuking his siding Corinthians, with this quick interrogatory: Is Christ, saith he (he means his catholic Church), divided? How? nothing more absurd than to grant division in the Church." An excellent paragraph! Does St. Paul, who reproves these Corinthians for their schisms, shut them out of the Church for them too? Does he deny them to belong to the Church, when he directs his Epistle to the Church of God at Corinth? Is it so very absurd, to grant that there are divisions in the Church, when St. Paul rebukes them for their divisions, which surely supposes that they were divided? And is it absurd to suppose that to be, which at the same time we confess to be? To say that Christ is divided, or that there are more Christs than one, would be very absurd indeed; to say that the Church of Christ is divided, is no absurdity, because it is true; but the absurdity or unreasonableness and indecency, which St. Paul charges them with, is the absurdity in practice, that when there is but one Christ, one Lord, whom they all worship, that the disciples of the same Lord should divide from each other, as if they served and worshipped different Masters.

But he has a very choice note about the Unity of the Church, page 9: "That it is the unity of a body, a living animate body;" but not I hope of a natural, but a mystical body, animated by that Divine Spirit which dwells in the whole, and in every part of it, and therefore nothing can cut us off from the unity of this body, but that which divides us totally from the quickening and animating influences of the Spirit, which it is certain all external divisions do not. Well! "but it is not the unity of a mathematical body which is divisible in *semper divisibilia*, but animate." This I believe every body will grant him, that the Church is not a mathematical body; but what hurt is there in mathematical unity? Oh! that is divisible without end, and that I confess is an ill kind of unity: but I hope it is one, till it be divided, and I fear a living animate body is divisible too; and if that cannot be one which is divisible, I fear there is no such thing as unity in nature, excepting in God; and then it is not sufficient to prove the catholic Church to be one, because it is united, unless he can prove that it is not divisible. But indeed he is a little out in applying his axiom, for as much as he despises this mathematical unity, he can find this indivisible unity only in a mathematical point; and possibly this may be the reason why the Church of Rome

makes the Pope the centre of catholic unity, which is as near a mathematical point, as it well can be.

In the same place he very gravely asks, "If the Church of God be distinguished even from the heretic and the schismatic, which of the Churches is like to be most catholic? That which maintains its unity against heresy and schism, or that which is most favourable to the separation?" No doubt, Sir, that which opposes heresy and schism is the most catholic Church; but I thought the question had been, not about the most, but the one, catholic Church. For one Church may be more catholic than another, by more strictly adhering to the catholic faith and worship, and yet both of them belong to the same catholic Church. Well, but what then? Truly I cannot guess; he says, "the Dissenter scarce owns any such distinctions, or very rarely." What? Do they never talk of heresy and schism? nor own that there are any heresies and schisms? But "they pronounce no anathemas, except one perhaps." Against the Church of Rome, I suppose he means. But anathemas are proper only for General Councils; and this is a new note of the catholic Church, which Bellarmine did not think of, *viz.* pronouncing anathemas, in which the Church of Rome has outdone all the Churches in the world, and therefore is the most catholic Church. "But they would have Dissenters looked upon as members of the aggregate Church, notwithstanding their dissensions, as well as others." Who are these "They?" the Church of England: then they are kinder to Dissenters than the Church of Rome, notwithstanding all the good words they have lately given them. But what then? What then, do you say? There is a terrible *then*. For this kindness of the persecuting Church of England to the Dissenters proves her to be a harlot. For "it is the famous case brought before King Solomon, Catholics, like the honest woman, would have the whole child; the harlot would have the child divided." Was ever such stuff put together? Catholics are for shutting all out of the Church, and being the whole Church themselves, therefore they are for the whole child, when they have cut off three parts of it, and divided it into a whole, united with itself. Others are so charitable, as far as it is possible, to make a whole Church, the one catholic Church, of all the divided communions of Christendom, and they, like the harlot, would have the child divided. What a blessing is ignorance and stupidity? The first to find out such arguments, as all the wit and learn-



ing in the world could never have discovered : and the second to make men believe them, and publish them without blushing. But here is enough in all conscience of this ; let us now try if we can pick out anything that may deserve an answer. And that the reader may the better judge between us, I shall take a review of the “*Brief Discourse concerning the Notes of the Church,*” in the method wherein it lies, and consider what this Answerer and Justifier of Bellarmine’s *Notes* has to say against it.

I observed then, that the true state of this controversy about the notes of the Church, as it is managed by Cardinal Bellarmine, is not, what it is which makes a Church a true Church ; but “*how among all the divisions of Christendom,\* we may find out that only true Church, which is the mistress of all other Churches, the only infallible guide in matters of faith, and to which alone the promises of pardon and salvation are made.*” Now the Answerer grants, that this is the controversy between us, and says the Roman Catholics put the question right. And no doubt but they have Christian liberty to put what questions they please ; all that I there observed was, that Protestants, in the notes they gave of a Church, answer to that question, What a true Church is ? that Papists give notes, whereby to know which is the true Church, and which is the most reasonable way ? shall be examined presently.

I began with the Protestant way, “*To find out a Church by the essential properties of the Church, such as the profession of the true Christian faith, and the Christian sacraments,† rightly and duly administered by persons rightly ordained, according to the institution of our Saviour, and the Apostolical practice.*”† Here he complains that we give but “*poor two*” notes of a Christian Church (page 12). But if two be all, they are a great deal better than such fifteen notes, as are none. And here I considered what Cardinal Bellarmine objects against these notes.

1. “*That note whereby we will distinguish things, must not be common to other things, but proper and peculiar to that of which it is a note.—Now I must confess these notes, as he observes, are common to all Christian Churches, and were intended to be so.—The Protestant Churches do not desire to confine the notes of the Church to their own private communion, but are very glad, if all the Churches in the world be as true Churches as them-*

\* Disc. p. 167.

† Page 168.

selves." "And this," says the Answerer, "let me tell him, will be easily granted, *tam, quam*, one every whit as good as another." And this I wish he could make good, for the sake of his own Church. But will he call this answering? He cites a place out of Tertullian, which he durst not translate, for fear every English reader should see that it was to no purpose: that heretics, though they differed from each other, yet did all conspire to oppose the truth; which is an admirable argument against all Churches conspiring in the same faith. "But this," he says, "supposes all Churches to be alike pure, equally catholic, equally apostolic." Just as much as to say, "That a man is a reasonable creature, supposes all men to be equally wise and equally honest." The true faith, and true sacraments, I hope, may be essential to all true Churches, as reason is to human nature, and yet all true Churches may not retain the Christian faith and sacraments in equal purity, no more than every man, who has reason, reasons equally well and truly. And therefore the Church of England can distinguish herself still both from Papists and fanatics, notwithstanding these notes.

His next argument, why these cannot be the notes of the Church is, "because the true faith and true sacraments are essential to the Church," and therefore can be no notes of discovery, (page 168); according to his former wise observation, "that a note must be extra-essential," which has been examined already. "For," says he, "the question is, which is the true Church?" But Protestants think the first question ought to be, "What a true Church is?" And then we can know, without any other notes, which is a true Church: as when we know what a man is, we can easily find out a man. But "how shall I know half this essence, true faith, &c.? We must either say, by consent with Scripture, or consent with the primitive Church, and then we shall stumble upon the Cardinal's notes, or somewhat like it." They, I confess, will be in danger of a very fatal stumble, if they stumble either upon Scripture or antiquity; but we dare venture both. Let them but grant, that true faith is the note of a true Church, and we will refer the trial of our faith to Scripture and antiquity when they please: though Cardinal Bellarmine had so much wit as not to refer the trial of the Church's faith to Scripture.

I added, "That when we give notes which belong to a whole species, as we must do, when we give the notes of a true Christian Church, we must give such notes as belong to the whole

kind; that is, to all true Christian Churches. And though these notes are common indeed to all true Christian Churches, yet they are proper and peculiar to a true Christian Church. As the essential properties of a man are common to all men, but proper to mankind: and this is necessary to make them true notes; for such notes of a Church, as do not fit all true Churches, cannot be true notes." But this, which is the true answer to Bellarmine's argument, he wisely drops.

"As for what the Cardinal urges, that all sects of Christians think themselves to have the true faith and true sacraments:" I answered, "I am apt to think they do; but what then? If they have not the true faith and true sacraments, they are not true Churches, whatever they think of it; and yet the true faith and true sacraments are certain notes of the true Church. A purchase upon a bad title, which a man thinks a good one, is not a good estate; but yet a purchase upon a title, which is not only thought to be, but is a good one, is a good estate."\*

To this he answers: "This is the same error again; for a good title, I hope, is essential; it is no note of a good estate." Oh the wit of some disputers! What other note is there of a good estate, but a good title? But he says, there are "other notes, which lead to the discovery of a good title:" what then? they are the notes of the title, not of the estate; they prove a good title, and a good title makes a good estate. And yet, "that the land be not pre-engaged, be free from all incumbrances, that there be no flaw in the demise," I take to be essential to a good title, and therefore, according to our author's logic, cannot be notes neither.

But what is all this to the purpose? Bellarmine proves, that the true faith cannot be the note of a true Church, because all sects of Christians pretend to it. I answer, that though those who pretend to the true faith, and have it not, are not true Churches; yet those who have the true faith are true Churches. As a purchase upon a bad title, which a man thinks a good one, is not a good estate, but yet a purchase upon a good title is a good estate. To this the Justifier of Bellarmine answers, "That a good title is essential, and therefore is no note of a good estate." Whereas the dispute here is not about essential or extra-essential notes, but whether the true faith cannot be a note of the true Church, because some men pretend to the true faith, who have it not. But want of

\* Disc. p. 170.

understanding is necessary to make some men answerers of books, which men of understanding know they cannot answer.

The Cardinal's second objection against the Protestant notes of a Church is, "That the notes of any thing must be more known than the thing itself;" this I granted.\* "Now," says he, "which is the true Church, is more knowable than which is the true faith:" and this I denied, for this plain reason, "Because the true Church cannot be known without knowing the true faith: for no Church is a true Church which does not profess the true faith." Now, says our Answerer, "this being denied, we prove it thus, &c." (page 15.) But methinks he should first have answered the argument, before he had gone to proving; but that it seems is not his talent. Well, but how does he prove that the true Church may be known before we know the true faith? Admirably, I assure you! "If the Church be the pillar of truth, raised up aloft, that it may be conspicuous to all men, it must be more manifest than the truth." This pillar raised aloft is a new notion, which I suppose he learned from the monument at London-bridge, which indeed is very visible; but other wiser writers, by the "pillar and ground of truth," prove that the Church is the foundation whereon truth is built; but that would not serve his purpose, to make the Church more visible than the truth, for he knows that the foundation is not so visible, as that which is built on it. And in the next page he honestly confesses, that the true faith is the foundation of the Church, and therefore proves that the true Church cannot be known by the true faith; for that is as if I should say, I cannot know the house unless I see the foundation, the next way to overturn it. So dangerous things are metaphors, which prove backward and forward, as a man fancies. But let the Church "be a pillar raised aloft," or a foundation-pillar, or what pillar he pleases, must not we know the Church, before we know it to be a pillar of truth? Or, can we know which Church is the pillar of truth, before we know what truth is?

Well! But let us now look to ourselves, for he undertakes to demonstrate it. "The fruits of the Spirit, the graces, are more known than the Spirit itself:" ergo, the true Church must be known before the true faith. "The outward profession of faith, more than the inward profession:" ergo, the true Church must be known before the outward profession of

\* Disc. p. 170.



the true faith, which makes a true Church. "The concrete more than the abstract, the believer than the belief." I can know the men before I know their faith: ergo, the true Church must be known before the true faith. He is a very hard-hearted man who will not allow this for demonstration; but he is a very good-natured man who will allow it to be sense.

Well! but he has a distinction that will do the business. *Aliud notius nobis, et aliud natura*, i. e. some things are more knowable in themselves, and some things are more knowable to us: but we are inquiring which is most knowable to us, the true faith or the true Church.

He grants then, "That true faith being a constituent of, or essential to the Church, may be said to be *natura notior*, first known in the order of nature. But we would not have these methods confounded: for if faith be essential, it is the less known to us for that very reason: because the first constituents of a compound are last known, except to the maker. It is more manifest to us, that we are flesh and blood, though God knows that we are dust and ashes." How happy is the age that has produced so great a schoolman as this, to whom the great Aquinas himself is but a mere novice! The Church is a compound body, in which faith is mixed and blended, as the four elements are in natural bodies: and therefore as we can more easily know what a stone or a tree is, than see the four elements in it, fire and air, and water and earth, of which it is compounded, and which are so mixed together as to become invisible in their own natures; so the Church is more knowable than the true faith, which is so compounded with the Church, as to become invisible itself: nay, to be as much changed and transformed in the composition, as dust and ashes is into flesh and blood: and thus I confess he has hit upon the true reason, why the true Church must be known before the true faith, because the Church of Rome (which is his true Church) has so changed and transformed the faith, that unless the faith can be known by the Church, the Church can never be known by the faith. How much is one grain of common sense better than all these philosophical subtilties? For indeed the Church is not a compound body, but a society of men professing the faith of Christ, and the only difference between them and other societies is the Christian faith; and therefore the Christian faith is the only thing whereby the Church is to be known, and to be distinguished from other bodies of men; and there-

fore the Church cannot be known without the faith ; unless I can know any thing without knowing that, by which alone it is what it is : and when there are several Churches in the world, and a dispute arises which is the true Church, there is no other possible way of deciding it without knowing the true faith ; for it is the true faith which makes a true Church, “not as dust and ashes make flesh and blood,” but as a true faith makes true believers, and true believers a true Church ; and though that society of men which is the Church is visible, yet the true Church is no more visible than the true faith ; for to see a Church is to see a society of men who profess the true faith, and how to see that, without seeing the true faith, is past my understanding.

In the next place the Cardinal urges, “That we cannot know what true Scripture is, nor what is the true interpretation of Scripture, but from the Church : and therefore we must know the Church before we can know the true faith.”\* To this I answered, “As for the first, I readily grant, that at this distance from the writing of the books of the New Testament, there is no way to assure us, that they were written by the Apostles, or Apostolical men, and owned for inspired writings, but the testimony of the Church in all ages.” And our Answerer says, “I begin now to answer honestly,” p. 17, and I am very glad I can please him. But it seems, I had pleased him better, if I would have called it an infallible tradition ; but that *infallible* is a word we Protestants are not much used to, when applied to tradition ; it satisfies us, if it be a very credible tradition, the truth of which we have no reason to suspect. But I have lost our Answerer’s favour for ever, by adding, “But herein we do not consider them as a Church, but as credible witnesses.” This makes him sigh to think, “how loth men are to own the Church. For this company of men so attesting, were Christians, not vagrants, or idle praters of strange news in ridiculous stories” (I hope not, for then they could not be credible witnesses), “but were agreed in the attestation of such a Divine volume, not only as a book” (which would do very little service indeed), “but as a rule, as an oracle.” All this I granted ; but still the question is, whether that testimony they give to the Scriptures, relies upon their authority, considered as a Church, or considered only as credible witnesses. And when this author shall think to answer what there I urge

\* Disc. p. 170.

to prove that they must not be considered as a Church, but as credible witnesses, I shall think of a reply, or shall yield the cause. But this Answerer is a most unmerciful man at comparisons : "For," says he, "to tell us we cannot know the Church, but by the Scripture, is to tell us that we cannot know a piece of gold without a pair of scales." The weight of gold, I suppose he means, and then it is pretty right ; and if we must weigh gold after our father, I suppose we may weigh it after the Church too, though she be our mother. "Or that a child cannot know his father, till he comes to read philosophy and understand the secrets of generation." And it is well, if he can know him then : this, I confess, is exceeding apposite, for a child must be a traditionary believer, and take his mother's word (as Papists believe the mother Church) who is his father.

"That we could not understand the true interpretation of Scripture neither, without the Church." This I denied, and gave my reasons for it, which our Answerer, according to his method of answering books, takes no notice of, but gives his reasons on the other side. I affirmed, "That the Scriptures are very intelligible in all things necessary to salvation, to honest and diligent readers." Instead of this, he says I affirm, "That every honest and diligent reader knows the sense" (of Scripture it must be) "in all things necessary to salvation ;" which differ as much, as being intelligible, and being actually understood : though I will excuse him so far, that I verily believe he had no dishonest intention in changing my words, but did not understand the difference between them : "But," says he, "did not St. Peter write to honest and diligent readers, when he warns them of wresting some places in St. Paul to their own destruction, as others also did ?" As they did other Scriptures also, St. Peter says ; but he says too, that they were the "unlearned and the unstable," who did thus. And though the Scriptures be intelligible, such men need a guide, not to dictate to them, but to expound Scripture, and help them to understand it ; but does St. Peter therefore warn them against reading the Scriptures, or direct them to receive the sense of Scripture only from the Church ? Or say, that honest or diligent readers cannot understand them without the authority of the Church ? But it seems, there are several articles very necessary to salvation, which men cannot agree about, no not all Protestants, as "the divinity of the Son of God, the necessity of good works, the distinction of sins mortal and less mortal,"

(which is a new distinction, unless by less mortal, he means venial, that is, not mortal at all), "the necessity of keeping the Lord's day, and using the Lord's Prayer." Now these points are either intelligibly taught in the Scripture, or they are not; if not, how does he know they are in the Scripture? If they be, why cannot an honest and diligent reader understand that which is intelligible? That all men do not agree about the sense of Scripture in all points, is no better argument to prove that the Scriptures are not intelligible, than that reason itself is not intelligible; for all men do not agree about that neither.

Well, but he will allow, "that honest readers may arrive to the understanding of that part of Scripture which the light of nature suggests. That we must not steal, defraud; we must do as we will be done by," p. 19. But he little thinks what he hath done in granting this, for then, if the Church should expound Scripture against the light of nature, honest readers may understand the Scripture otherwise; and if the Church should be found tripping in such matters, honest readers might be apt to question her infallibility in other cases, for those who once mistake, can never be infallible. And yet this light of nature teaches a great many shrewd things, and the Scripture teaches them too; and therefore, in these matters, honest and diligent readers may understand the Scriptures, though it be against the exposition of the Church, as, that divine worship must be given to none but God; that God, who is an invisible Spirit, must not be worshipped by material and visible images; that public prayers ought to be in a language which is understood by the people; that marriage is honourable among all men; that faith is to be kept with all men; that every soul must be subject to the higher powers; that none can judicially forgive sins, but only God; that to forgive sin, is not to punish it, and therefore God does not punish for those sins which he has wholly pardoned. And other such like things are taught by the light of nature, as well as Scripture; and we thank him heartily, that he will give us leave to understand these things. But he proceeds: "It is the revelation part, the mysterious part, which is properly called the holy Scripture, which is not so perspicuous." What, are not the words perspicuous and intelligible? To what purpose then were they writ? Or, is it the thing which is above our comprehension? But that does not hinder but we may understand what the Scripture teaches, though we do not fully comprehend it. For I would know, whether they



fully comprehend the doctrine of the holy Trinity and incarnation, the natures and person of Christ, which were the subject of the Arian, Nestorian, and Eutychian heresies; when the Church teaches these things: I suppose they will not say they do; and yet they will own that they can understand what the Church teaches about them: and then, though they cannot comprehend these mysteries, yet they may as well understand what the Scripture, as what the Church teaches about them. "Now," says our author, "to say the Scripture is plain to every honest private reader in these arcana, is to deny and cassate all Church history, make œcumenical Councils ridiculous, run down all synods and convocations that ever were or shall be." Why so, I pray? Does Church history, or œcumenical Councils, all convocations and synods, declare that the Scriptures are not intelligible in these matters? Or that a private, honest, diligent reader cannot understand them? How came they then to determine them for articles of faith? By their own authority, or by the authority of Scripture? Should synods and convocations, and œcumenical Councils, determine that for an article of faith, which is not plain and intelligible in Scripture, they were ridiculous indeed, and there were an end of their authority.

And here he appeals to the testimonies produced by the Cardinal, out of Irenæus, Tertullian, and St. Augustin, which have been so often answered already, that I do not think it worth the while to engage with this Answerer about them. Let the reader, if he pleases, consult some late books to this purpose, as that learned vindication of the answer to the royal papers about Church authority, and the "Pillar and Ground of Truth." But I cannot pass on without taking notice of his unanswerable argument, to prove, "that the Church of Rome understands St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and by consequence, the articles of justification, whether by faith alone, or works, better than all the lay-readers of the Reformation, *viz.* because he can never be persuaded, that any private man should understand an Epistle of St. Paul better than the Church to which it was written. How unworthy is it to opine the contrary?" And how silly is it to think that those must necessarily understand an epistle best, to whom it was written? But if those Christians at Rome, to whom St. Paul wrote (for he takes no notice of any formed and settled Church there, at the writing of his Epistle, and therefore does not direct it to the Church, as he does in other Epistles, but "to the saints that

are at Rome:" I say, if those Christians) might be supposed at that time (when the state of the controversy among them was generally known), to understand this Epistle better than we can now, yet what is this to the Church of Rome at sixteen hundred years distance? However, by this rule, we may understand all St. Paul's other Epistles as well as the Church of Rome, and that will serve our purpose: and yet methinks, if the Churches to which the Epistles were sent, are the only authentic expositors of such Epistles, all those Churches to whom St. Paul wrote, should have been preserved to this day, to have expounded those Epistles to us; and yet not one of them is now in being, excepting the Church of Rome; and therefore, at least, we must make what shift we can to expound them ourselves, for the Church of Rome can pretend no greater right in them than the Church of England.

And thus I came, in the second place, to consider the Cardinal's use of notes, and found several faults with them: \* 1. "That he gives notes to find out which is the true Church, before we know what a true Church is; whereas there are two inquiries in order of nature before this, *viz.* Whether there be a true Church or not? And what it is? And though the Cardinal takes it for granted, that there is a Church, I demanded a proof it, that they would give me some notes whereby to prove that there is a true Church." This demand amazes our Answerer, and makes him cross himself, and fall to his beads, "Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth!" But this is a devil that won't be conjured down; let him either give me some notes to prove that there is a Church; or tell me how I shall know it. Yes, that he will do, "for it is self-evident," he says, "that there is a Church," p. 20, "as it is that there is a sun in the firmament, or else the heathens could never see it." But what do the heathens see? a Christian Church? Do they then believe the holy catholic Church? Why then does he call them heathens? And if they see a Church, and do not believe it to be a Church, then it is such a seeing of a Church, as does not prove that there is a Church; for if it did, then all that see the Church would believe it, as all that see the sun, believe that there is a sun. Good works indeed may be seen, as he learnedly proves; and a Jewish synagogue may be seen, and Christian oratories and chapels with crosses upon them, and this may prove, "that those who built them, believed in

\* Disc. p. 172.

a crucified God," which is all he alleges to prove, that it is self-evident that there is a Church; by which I see something also that he does not know, what it is to see a Church; though I told him before, "That to see a company of men, who call themselves a Church, is not to see a Church. For a Church must have a Divine original and institution, and therefore there is no seeing a Church, without seeing its charter; for there can be no other note or mark of the being of a Church, but the institution of it."\*

I observed, "That the use of notes in the Church of Rome, is to find out the Church before and without the Scriptures; for if they admit of a Scripture-proof, they must allow, that we can know and understand the Scriptures without the authority or interpretation of the Church, which undermines the very foundation of Popery." In answer to this he says, "Nothing is more easy and familiar (but that men love to be troublesome to their friends) than that the Scriptures must be known by the Church, and the Church may be known (besides its own evidence) by the Scriptures."

This I believe he has heard so often said, without considering it, that it is become very easy and familiar to him; but it is the hardest thing in the world to me, and therefore begging leave of him for being so troublesome, I must desire him to explain to me, how two things can be known by each other, when neither of them can be known first: for if the son must beget the father, and the father beget the son, which of them must be begotten first?

But he has an admirable proof of this way of knowing the Church by the Scripture, and the Scripture by the Church. For so St. Peter "exhorts the wife to good conversation, that she may thereby win the husband to Christianity, even without the Word, without the holy Scripture:" implying that a man may be brought over to Christianity both ways, by the Church, and by the Scripture. Suppose this, what is this to knowing the Scripture by the Church, and the Church by the Scripture. The pious and modest conversation of the wife may give her husband a good opinion of her religion, and may be the first occasion of his inquiring into it, which may end in his conversion; and so may the holy and exemplary lives of Christians do: but does the husband in this case resolve his faith into the authority of his wife without the Scripture? and then

\* Disc. p. 173.

resolve the authority of his wife into the authority of the Scripture? If St. Peter had said this indeed, I should have thought we might as reasonably have given this authority to the Church, as to a wife.

2dly. I observed, Another blunder in this dispute about notes, is,\* “that they give us notes whereby to find out the true catholic Church, before we know what a particular Church is—because the catholic Church is nothing else but all the true Christian Churches in the world, united together by one common faith and worship, and such acts of communion as distinct Churches are capable of, and obliged to; every particular Church, which professes the true faith and worship of Christ, is a true Christian Church, and the catholic Church is all the true Christian Churches in the world.—And therefore there can be no notes of a true Church, but what belong to all the true Christian Churches in the world.” Which shews how absurd it is, when they are giving notes of a true Church, to give notes of a true catholic, and not of a true particular Church: when I know what makes a particular Church a true Church, I can know what the catholic Church is, which signifies all true particular Churches, which are the one mystical body of Christ; but I can never know what a true catholic Church is, without knowing what makes a particular Church a true Church; for all Churches have the same nature, and are homogeneal parts of the same body.

This I perceive our Answerer did not understand one word of, and therefore says nothing to the main argument, which is to prove, that those who will give notes of the Church, must give such as are proper to all true particular Churches; for there can be no other true notes of a Church, but what belong to all true Churches, because all true Churches have the same nature and essence; which spoils the Cardinal’s design of notes to find out the one catholic Church, which all Christians must communicate in, and out of which there is no salvation. And therefore, instead of touching upon the main point, he runs out into a new harangue about unity and catholicism; what unity and communion makes a catholic Church; whether the catholic Church be the aggregate of all Churches, or only of sound and orthodox Churches, which has been considered already, and is nothing to the purpose here: for the only single question here is, whether I can know the catholic

\* Disc. p. 174.



Church, before I know what a true particular Church is; and consequently, whether the notes of the Church ought not to be such as belong to all true particular Churches.

By this rule, I briefly examined Cardinal Bellarmine's Notes: those which belonged to all true Churches, which very few of them do, I allow to be true notes, but not peculiar to the Church of Rome. As the 6th, "The agreement and consent in doctrine with the ancient and Apostolic Church;" and the 8th, "The holiness of its doctrine," are the chief, if not the only notes of this nature, and these we will stand or fall by.

And because I said, we will stand or fall by these notes, the Answerer endeavours to shew that they do not belong to the Church of England: but whether they belong to the Church of Rome, and do not belong to us, was not my business to consider in a general discourse about notes; but it has been examined since, in the examination of those particular notes, and there the reader may find it. But our Answerer, according to his old wont, has picked out as unlucky instances as the greatest adversary of the Church of Rome could have done, *viz.* the doctrine of justification and repentance, which are not so corrupted by the very worst fanatics as they are by the Church of Rome, witness their doctrines of "confession and penance;" I may add, of "merits and indulgences," for want of which he quarrels with the Reformation. "Other notes," I observed, "were not properly notes of the true Church, any otherwise than as they are testimonies to the truth of common Christianity:" such as his 9th, "the efficacy of doctrine:" the 10th, "the holiness of the lives of the first authors and fathers of our religion." As for the efficacy of doctrine, he says, "That should bear testimony to the Church also, if it be true, that more are converted to the catholic Church, than apostatize from it." Let him read the examination of the 9th note for this. But if it be true also, that the Roman Catholics do convert more to the Christian faith, than any other sort of Christians (as the Spaniards converted the poor Indians), this follows undeniably, that they believe they are more bound to spread the Christian religion than any other. And what if they did believe so, are not others as much bound as they? And what follows from hence? That they are the only true Church, because they are more zealous in propagating Christianity? Does this relate to the efficacy of the doctrine, or to the zeal of the preacher? But he says,

“The Pharisees compassing sea and land to make a proselyte, proved them to be the best and most zealous of all the Jewish party,” though they made them ten times more the children of hell than they were before. I think none but our author would have had so little wit, as to have justified the Church of Rome by the zeal of the Pharisees; for though, as he says, our Saviour’s “woe against the Pharisees,” was not precisely intended against their zeal; yet this proves that the greatest corrupters of the faith, may be the most zealous to propagate their errors; and therefore such a zeal does not prove them to be the best men, nor the truest Church.

Thus I said the 11th note, “the glory of miracles;” and the 12th, “the spirit of prophecy,” are testimonies to the religion, not primarily to the Church.

To which he answers, “Let no man be so besotted as to say, that all miracles of a later date are delusions.” Fear not, Sir, no miracles, neither late nor early, are delusions, but some delusions are called miracles, witness the miracles that poor Jetzer felt. But the question is, Whether true miracles prove that particular Church in which they are done the only true Church; or only give testimony to the religion in confirmation of which they are wrought. “The spirit of prophecy also,” he says, “belongs to the Church, unless we find that all the true Churches in the circle pretend to it.” All that pretend to a religion revealed by prophecy, pretend to the spirit of prophecy; but all do not pretend in this age to have the gift of prophecy, though they may as justly pretend to it as the Church of Rome. See the answer to the 12th note.

I added, that the 13th, 14th, and 15th notes, I doubted, would prove no notes at all, because they are not always true, and at best uncertain. The 13th is “the confession of adversaries,” which, he says, “will carry a cause in our temporal courts.” And good reason too, because they are supposed to speak nothing but what they know, and what the evidence of truth extorts from them; but how the adversaries of Christianity should come to know so well which is the true Church, who believe no Church at all, is somewhat mysterious; and yet the Cardinal is miserably put to it to make out this note, as may be seen in the answer. The 15th, “Temporal felicity,” he says, “will evidence the Church, as Job’s later state did evidence his being in favour with God.” But what did his former state do? Was he not then in favour with God too? But would any man talk at this rate, who remembers that

Christ was crucified, and his Church persecuted for three hundred years? The 14th, "The unhappy exit of the enemies of the Church:" he says, "Count Teckeley may be a witness of it," who sides with infidels against the Church, and is accordingly blessed. And what thinks he of the misfortunes of some great princes, who have been as zealous for the Church?

His 3rd and 4th notes, I said, "were not notes of a Church, but God's promises made to his Church." And here he triumphs mightily: "Is there such opposition then between notes and promises?" and finds out "some promises," which he says, "are notes of the Church:" I shall not examine that, because it is nothing to the purpose; for if there be some promises which are not notes of the Church, I am safe; for I did not say, that no promises could be notes, but that these were not notes, but promises, and gave my reasons for it, why these particular promises could not be notes. As for the 3rd, "A long duration, that it shall never fail;" I said, "This could never be a note till the day of judgment." "A fine time," he says, "to choose our religion in the meanwhile:" but thanks be to God, we have other notes of a Church than this, therefore need not wait till the day of judgment to know the true Church. But it is certain, the duration of the Church till the end of the world, is such a mark of the Church as cannot be known till the end of the world. The fourth, "Amplitude and extent, is not to distinguish one Christian Church from another, but to distinguish the Christian Church from other religions;" but then I doubt this prophecy has not received its just accomplishment yet, for all the Christian Churches together bear but a small proportion to the rest of the world. And if this promise be not yet accomplished, it cannot be a note of the Church. But the reader may see all this fairly stated in the examination of these notes.

His 5th note, "The succession of bishops in the Church of Rome, from the Apostles' time till now," I grant is a note of the Roman Church; and the succession of bishops in the Greek Church is as good a note of the Greek Church; and any Churches which have been later planted, who have bishops in succession from any of the Apostles, or Apostolical bishops, by this note are as good Churches as they. This he very honestly grants, and thereby confesses, that this note will not prove the Church of Rome to be the one catholic Church, which the Cardinal intended by it. Now because I said, "This note is common to all true Churches, and therefore can do the

Church of Rome no service," he takes me up: "All true Churches! then where is your communion with Luther's or Calvin's disciples? They do not so much as pretend to succession." Nor is this the dispute now, whether those Churches which have not a succession of bishops are true Churches; but if he will allow a succession of bishops to be a note of a true Church, all those Churches are true Churches, which have this succession, as the Greek Church, and the Church of England have; and therefore this note can do no service to the Church of Rome, as not being peculiar to it. But as for what he says, "That succession of doctrine, without succession of office, is a poor plea;" I must needs tell him, I think it is a much better plea than succession of office, without succession of doctrine. For I am sure, that is not a safe communion, where there is not a succession of Apostolical doctrine; but whether the want of a succession of bishops, will in all cases unchurch, will admit of a greater dispute: I am sure a true faith in Christ, with a true Gospel-conversation, will save men; and some learned Romanists\* defend that old definition of the Church, that it is *cætus fidelium*, the company of the faithful, and will not admit bishops or pastors into the definition of a Church.

His 7th note, I own, is home to his purpose, "That that is the only true Church, which is united to the Bishop of Rome, as to its head." If he could prove this, it must do his business without any other notes.—But it is like the confidence of a Jesuit, to make that the note of the Church, which is the chief subject of the dispute. "Very well," says our Answerer, "so Irenæus, so St. Cyprian, St. Ambrose, St. Hierom, Optatus, St. Austin, are answered; for none of these can turn the scale." Nor did any of these Fathers ever say, "That the Bishop of Rome is the head of the Church." This is the dispute still, and will be the dispute, till the Church of Rome quit her absurd claims to it: but he says, "We of the Church of England should consider, that not above an hundred years ago, we communicated with the Apostolic see." And does that make the Church of Rome the head of the Church? But, "have we grounds enough for such a breach as we have made?" It is ground enough sure, to renounce our subjection to the Bishop of Rome, if he have no right to claim it. But transubstantiation, and the worship of images,

\* Johan. Laun. Epist. vol. 8. Ep. 13. Nicol. Gatinæo.



and addresses to saints, he thinks very harmless things. But the mischief is we do not think them so. But this is not a place to dispute these matters.

His first note, concerning the name Catholic, I observed, "makes every Church a catholic Church which will call itself so." And here he learnedly disputes about some indelible names, which the providence of God orders to be so for great ends. St. Paul directs his Epistle to the Romans, *i. e.* he hopes to the Roman Catholics, p. 34; but a Roman Catholic was an unknown name in those days, and many ages after. But at that time, the world, in the Apostle's phrase, was in communion with her. Where has the Apostle any such phrase? and yet we are now a disputing, not about catholic communion, but about the name Roman Catholic Church. Whereas, it does not appear that the Romans had at that time so much as the name of the Church, as I observed before; and the very name of the Catholic Church cannot be proved so ancient as that time; and, her faith being spoken of, which he interprets her being admired throughout the whole world, whatever it proves, does not prove that she had then the name of the Catholic Church. He adds, "It is not without something of God, that she keeps the name still:" but how does she keep it? She will call herself catholic, when nobody else will allow her to be so; and thus any Church may keep this name, which did originally belong to all true orthodox Churches: as for heretics, they have challenged the name, and kept it too among themselves, as the Church of Rome does, though it belonged no more to them than it does to her. His other indelible names of times and places, he may make the best of he can. But let all concerned in Black-friars, and Austin-friars, and the house of Chartreux, which has so miraculously preserved its name, look to it; for he seems to hope, that these indelible names are preserved for some good purpose.

I added,\* the name Catholic does not declare what a Church is, but in what communion it is: and is no note of a true Church, unless it be proved that they are the true Churches which are in communion with each other. For if three parts in four of all the Churches in the world were very corrupt and degenerate in faith and worship, and were in one communion, this would be the most catholic communion, as catholic signifies the most general and universal; but yet, the fourth part,

\* Disc. p. 176.

which is sincere, would be the best and truest Church, and the catholic Church, as that signifies the communion of all orthodox and pure Churches.

This distinction of catholic, our Answerer likes well, and says, "it does not hurt them, for that case is yet to come," *viz.* that the most corrupt communion should be most catholic or universal; but that was not the force of the argument, nor any part of it, though, it may be, it is too true; but the argument was this, that the bare name of catholic cannot prove a Church to be a true Church, because that does not relate to its nature and essence, but to its communion. Now, catholic communion signifies, either the most universal communion, or the communion only of pure and orthodox Churches, be their number more or less. If we take it in the first sense, the most catholic communion may be the most corrupt; for it may so happen, that the greater number of Churches which are in communion with each other, may be very corrupt. If we take it in the second sense, we must first know whether those Churches are pure and orthodox, before we can tell whether they be catholic Churches; and therefore, in both senses, the bare name of catholic cannot prove a Church to be a true Church; for we must first know whether they be true, as that signifies pure and orthodox Churches, before we can know whether they be catholic.

But he says, "It is not probable that God would spread such a temptation and stumbling-block before his own people; yet if he should, for example's sake, have suffered Lutheranism or Cranmerism to have spread to such a measure, the palpableness of the schism would have been security, perhaps sufficient to keep all prudent persons where they were." This is nothing to the present argument (as indeed it would be surprising to find him say anything to the purpose), but yet, if the most catholic communion, as that signifies the most universal (though the notes do not refer to catholic communion, but to the name catholic), were a note of the true Church, it is not sufficient to say, that it is probable that God will not suffer a corrupt communion to be the most universal; but he must prove that God has promised this shall not be: and if, according to this supposition, Lutheranism or Cranmerism had prevailed three parts in four over the Church, how could the palpableness of the schism secure his prudent man from the infection? For if three parts of the Church were divided from the fourth, why should a prudent man charge so much

the greater number with the schism? why should the three parts be the schismatics, and not the fourth?

3rdly. I observed another mystery of finding the true Church by notes, \* is, "to pick out of all the Christian Churches in the world, one Church which we must own for the only catholic Church, and reject all other Churches as heretical or schismatical, or uncatholic Churches, who refuse obedience and subjection to this one catholic Church." For if this be not the intent of it, what do all the notes of the Church signify to prove that the Church of Rome is the only true catholic Church? And if they do not prove this, the Cardinal has lost his labour.

Now, I observed, that there are many things to be proved here, before we are ready for the notes of the Church. They must first prove, that there is but one true Church in the world; or, as I had expressed it before, "one Church, which is the mistress of all other Churches, and the only principle and centre of catholic unity." To this he answers, p. 37, "That there is but one true Church ought to be proved" (*Credo unam Sanctam* doth, it seems, not prove it); "but if there were as many Churches as provinces, if they are true, they are one, as hath been explained. Nor stands it with the very institution of the creed, to say, I believe many true Churches; no more than to say, I believe in many true faiths" (which, I suppose, there is some new institution for also, believing in the true faith); "for if they be true, say I, they are one (harp not therefore any more on that jarring string)." It is really a miserable case for a Church, which is able to speak somewhat better for herself, to be exposed by such advocates as do not understand her own principles. For will any learned Romanist deny, that there are several particular true Churches? Or will any Protestant deny, that all true Churches are one catholic Church, which we profess in our creed? But the controversy between us and the Cardinal is quite of a different nature, not whether there are any particular true Churches, nor whether all the true Churches in the world make one catholic Church; but whether the Church of Rome (which considered in itself is but a particular Church) be the only true catholic Church, the centre of catholic unity. So that no Church is a true Church but only by communion with and subjection to the Church of Rome. Now, this he can never prove by the notes of a true

\* Disc. p. 177.

Church, unless he first prove that there is but one particular Church, the communion with, and subjection to which, makes all other Churches true Churches: for if there be more true Churches than one, which owe subjection to no other Church, but only a friendly and brotherly correspondence, then, though his notes of a Church could prove the Church of Rome to be a true Church, yet could they not prove that all other Churches must be subject to the Church of Rome. The Church of England may be a true Church still, though she renounce obedience to the Bishop of Rome.

But he undertakes to prove the Church of Rome not to be the mistress, which, as it may be construed, is invidious (though she challenges all the authority of a mistress), but the mother of other Churches. And if he could do it, it were nothing to the present argument, which is not, whether the Church of Rome be the mistress or mother (which he pleases) of all other Churches, but whether the bare notes of a true Church can prove this prerogative of the Church of Rome, when there are other true Churches besides herself. But yet his arguments to prove this are very considerable.

1st. "Because the Church of Rome is acknowledged to be so by all in communion with her," p. 37, which is indeed unanswerable; the Church of Rome, herself, and all in communion with her, say, she is the mother of all other Churches, and therefore she is so.

2dly. "The learned King James the First did not stick to own her." Did King James the First own the Pope's supremacy?

3rdly. "To us in England, it is past denial, our mother and nurse too." Our step-mother, we will own her, and nothing more. "But it is her authority that keeps up in England, above all other reformed Churches, our bishops, our liturgy, our cathedrals; by her records, her evidences, they stand the shock of antichristian adversaries." This is strange news! We are indeed, then, more beholden to the Church of Rome than we thought for; but does the Church of Rome allow our bishops, or our liturgy? How then does her authority keep them up? Truly, only because she cannot pull them down, and I pray God she may never be able to do it. She is not our principle, as he speaks, and never shall be our centre again. His fourth argument is from Vitruvius (which I believe is the first time it was used), from the situation of Rome, for the empire of the world, which, he thinks, holds as well for



the empire of the Church. And so he concludes with our Lord's eulogies of St. Peter's chair, which I could never meet with yet. This is a formidable man, especially considering how many such writers the Church of Rome is furnished with.

I added, "That they must prove that the catholic Church does not signify all the particular true Churches that are in the world, but some one Church, which is the fountain of catholic unity:" that is, says he, "he should say, not only signify all, but also some one," p. 39. No, Sir, I say, "not signify all, but some one." The Cardinal proposes to find out by his notes the one true catholic Church among all the communions of Christendom; and to prove that the Church of Rome is this catholic Church. Now, I say, this is a senseless undertaking, unless he can prove that the catholic Church does not signify all the particular true Churches, which make the one Church and body of Christ, but some one Church, which is the fountain of catholic unity, and communion with which gives the denomination of catholic Churches to all others. Now, what has our Answerer to say to this, besides his criticism of *all*, and *some one*? Truly, he fairly grants it, and says, "That other Churches, as daughters of the Mother-Church, are formally catholic; but take the mother by herself, and she is fundamentally catholic." But this, I say, ought to have been proved, that there is any one Church which alone is the catholic Church, as the foundation of catholic unity, which the Cardinal's notes cannot prove. That the catholic Church began in one single Church (as he says), I readily grant, and became catholic, by spreading itself all over the world; but thus the Church at Jerusalem, not at Rome, was the matrix, as he speaks, of the catholic Church, which yet gave the Church of Jerusalem no pre-eminency or authority over all other Churches. But the Church of Rome does not pretend herself to be fundamentally catholic in this sense, that she was the first Church, but that by virtue of St. Peter's chair, the sovereign authority of the Church is seated in her, and none can belong to the catholic Church but those who embrace her communion, and submit to her authority. Which shews how well our Answerer understood this controversy, when he says, p. 40, "Time was when the Church of Jerusalem was so (that is, the catholic Church, as it was the first and only Church, and the matrix of all other Churches), or the Church of Antioch (which never was so), then why not the Church of Rome? What think you, in the sense given?" The Church of Rome does not challenge to be the catholic

Church in the sense now given, *i. e.* as the first and original Church; and if she did, all the world knows she was not; and the sense now given will not prove the Church of Rome to be the catholic Church in the sense in which she claims it. But this is intolerable, to dispute with men who do not understand what they dispute about. To hasten then to a conclusion; for if my reader, as I suspect, is by this time sick of reading, he may easily guess how sick I am of writing.

The last thing I objected against Bellarmine's notes was, that they pretend to find out "an infallible Church by notes, on whose authority we must rely for the whole Christian faith, even for the Holy Scriptures themselves. For suppose he had given us the notes of a true Church—before we can hence conclude, that this Church is the infallible guide, and uncontrollable judge of controversies, we must be satisfied that the Church is infallible.—This can never be proved but by Scripture; for unless Christ have bestowed infallibility on the Church, I know not how we can prove she has it: and whether Christ have done it or not, can never be proved but by the Scriptures: so that a man must read the Scriptures, and use his own judgment to understand them, before it can be proved to him that there is an infallible Church; and therefore those who resolve the belief of the Scripture into the authority of the Church, cannot, without great impudence, urge the authority of the Scriptures to prove the Church's infallibility; and yet thus they all do; nay, prove their notes of the Church from Scripture, as the Cardinal does."\* To which our adversary answers, "Infallibility and transubstantiation; God forgive all the stirs that have been made upon their account." Amen, say I; and so far we are agreed.

He makes some little offers at proving an infallible judge, or at least a judge which must have the final decision of controversies, whether infallible or not; this is not the present dispute, but how we shall know whether the Church be infallible or not? If by the Scriptures, how we shall know them without the Church?

To avoid a circle here of proving the Church by the Scriptures, and the Scriptures by the Church, he says, "There are other convictions whereby the Word of God, first pointed at by the Church, makes out its Divine original." But let him answer plainly, whether we can know the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and understand the true sense of them, without

\* Disc. p. 179.

the infallible authority of the Church? If he will say we can, we are agreed, and then we will grant, that we may find out the Church by the Scripture; but then he must not require us afterwards to receive the Scripture and interpretation of it upon the authority of the Church; and so farewell to Popery.

As for that advice I gave Protestants, "Where they dispute with Papists, whatever they do at other times, not to own the belief of the Scriptures, till they had proved them in their way by the authority of the Church, and then we should quickly see what blessed work they would make of it: how they would prove their Church's infallibility, and what fine notes we should have of a Church, when we had rejected all their Scripture proofs, as we ought to do, till they have first satisfied us that theirs is the only true infallible Church, upon whose authority we must believe the Scriptures, and everything else." He says, "it is very freakish, to say no worse——especially when I grant (to my cost) that we come to the knowledge of the Scripture by the uninterrupted tradition of credible witnesses, though I will not say tradition of the Church." But if he understands no difference between the authority of an infallible judge, and of a witness, he is not fit to be disputed with.

As for what I said, "That I would gladly hear what notes they would give a Pagan to find out the true infallible Church by," he honestly confesses, "there can be no place for such notes when the authority of the Scripture is denied." Which is a plain confession, how vain these notes are, till men believe the Scriptures; and when they believe the Scriptures, they may find more essential notes of a Church than these, *viz.* that true evangelical faith and worship which makes a Church; but these notes the Cardinal rejects, because we cannot know the true faith and the Scriptures without the Church; and the Justifier of Bellarmine says, that there can be no place for the notes of the Church when the authority of the Scripture is denied; and therefore they must first agree this matter before I can say any more to them.

But yet he says, "If the Church should say to a Pagan, we have some books sacred with us, which we reckon are oracles of God, transmitted to us from generation to generation, for almost seventeen hundred years, which we and our forefathers have been versed in by daily explications, homilies, sermons. However you accord not with the contents of the book, yet we justly take ourselves to be the best judges and

expounders of those oracles. The Pagan would say, The Church spoke reason," p. 44. But nothing to the purpose. For the question is, what notes of a Church you will give to a Pagan, to convince him which is the true Church, before he believes the Scripture; and here you suppose a Pagan would grant that you were the best interpreters of books that you accounted Divine, and had been versed in near seventeen hundred years. But would this make a Pagan believe the Scriptures? or take your words for such notes of a Church as you pretended to produce out of Scripture? Especially if he knew that there were other Christians, who pretended to the Scriptures and the interpretation of them as well as yourselves; and the only way you had to defend yourselves against them was, without the authority of Scripture, to make yourselves judges both of the Scriptures and the interpretation of them.

But "he knows none that are so senseless to resolve all their faith into the authority of the Church." I perceive he does not know Cardinal Bellarmine, whom he undertakes to justify, as any one would guess by his way of justifying him: let but the Romanists quit this plea, that our faith must be resolved into the authority of the Church, and I shall not despair to see our other disputes fairly ended.

For the conclusion of the whole, I observed, "That it is a most senseless thing to resolve all our faith into the authority of the Church.—Whereas it is demonstrable, that we must know and believe most of the articles of the Christian faith, before we can know whether there be any Church or not. The order observed in the Apostles' Creed is a plain evidence of this; for all those articles which are before the holy catholic Church, must in order of nature be known before it."

This he grants, that in order of nature, all those articles of the creed concerning Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must be known, before we can know a Church, but "to us the Church is most known:" which is plain and downright nonsense; if by "most known," he means first known, which is the present dispute; for whatever by the order of nature must be known first, must be first known without any distinction. For we speak now not of the methods of learning, but of resolving our faith into its first principles, and that surely must follow the order of nature. If the belief of the Church's authority be not in order of nature before the belief of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it is a senseless thing to resolve our faith into



that, which though we should grant were the first cause of knowing these, yet it is not the first principle in order of nature into which faith must be resolved. Children, indeed, as he observes, must receive their creed upon the authority of their parents, or of the Church, which is more known to them than their creed; as all other scholars must receive the first principles of any art or science upon the authority of their masters. But will you say, that the Latin tongue is resolved into the authority of the schoolmaster, because the scholars in learning the Latin tongue rely on his authority? which yet is just as good sense as to say, that our faith must be resolved into the authority of the Church, because the Church teaches catechumens their catechism, and they receive it upon the authority of their parents, or priests. And hence, indeed, he may conclude that a young catechumen knows his teachers before he knows his creed: but to conclude that he knows a Church first, “as that signifies a blessed society, where salvation is to be had,” is a little too much; for that supposes that he knows the Church before he has learned *unam sanctam ecclesiam*, that is, before he has found the Church in the Creed, which is great forwardness indeed.

If he does not speak of children, but of men-catechumens, for such there were in the primitive Church, and such he seems to speak of, when he says, “It is plain that the catechumen knew there was a Church, a blessed society, where salvation was to be had, before he would enter himself to be catechised in the faith:” I do not doubt but such men did know the Church before they submitted to the instructions of it; but they knew Christ too, and believed in him before they knew the Church. For they first believed in Christ, and then joined themselves to that society which professed the Christian faith, that they might be the better instructed in the doctrines of Christianity; that they might learn from the Church what the Christian faith is, and the reasons of it; not that they would wholly resolve their faith into Church authority.

But I find by our author, that the Creed was made only for catechumens; for he says, “the first person used at the beginning of the Creed, *I believe*, signifies I, who desire to be made a member of the Church, by the holy sacrament of initiation, do believe what hath been proposed to me first, and then comprehended in that fundamental breviate.”

What he designs by this, I cannot guess; for still the catechumen professes to believe in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,

before he believes the holy catholic Church. But pray, what does *I* signify, when a bishop, or priest, or the Pope himself repeats the Creed?

If, as he concludes, we must believe Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before we can completely determine the Church, and its definition : he should have said, before we can know whether there be a Church or not, much less believe upon its authority ; then, indeed, as he says, “ the Creed must begin with I believe in God.” But if our faith must be resolved into the authority of the Church, as the Church of Rome teaches : and as these laborious endeavours of finding out a Church by extra-essential notes suppose ; then the Creed, as I said, ought to begin with, “ I believe in the holy catholic Church, and upon the authority of this Church, I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Church, and in the Holy Ghost.”

Thus I have with invincible patience particularly answered one of the most senseless pamphlets that ever I read ; and I hope it will not be wholly useless ; for sometimes it is as necessary to expose nonsense, as to answer the most plausible arguments ; though, notwithstanding the mirth of it, I do not desire to be often so employed.

BELLARMINE'S FIRST NOTE OF THE CHURCH,  
 CONCERNING  
 THE NAME OF CATHOLIC, EXAMINED.

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*Prima Nota, est ipsum Catholicæ Ecclesiæ et Christianorum Nomen.*

Bellar. cap. iv. de Notis Ecclesiæ. p. 1477.

THAT the sincere preaching of the faith or doctrine of Christ, as it is laid down in the Scriptures, is the only sure, infallible mark of the Church of Christ, is a truth so clear in itself, so often and fully proved by learned men of the Reformation, that it may justly seem a wonder, that any Church, which is not conscious to herself of any errors and deviations from it, should refuse to put herself upon that trial: this gave being to the Church of Christ at first, makes it one and makes it catholic. According as this fares in any part or member of it, is that Church distinguished and denominated; it will be true or false, pure or corrupt, sound or heretical, according as the faith it holds bears a conformity or repugnance to the written doctrine of our Saviour: an orthodox faith makes an orthodox Church, but if her faith becomes tainted and heterodox, the Church will be so too; and should it happen wholly to apostatize from the faith of Christ, it would wholly cease to be a catholic Church. This may seem to be the reason, that the present Church of Rome, being notoriously warped from truth, declines the being examined and measured by this rule (having, indeed, some reason to be against the Scripture that is so evidently against her) and endeavours to support herself with great names and swelling titles: hence it is that we so often hear the name of catholic, antiquity, amplitude, unity, succession, miracles, prophecy, and several others that their great Cardinal sets down, as so many perpetual and never-failing marks and characters to find out the true Church, and to assert his own.

I shall in this short Tract examine the first of these, and that I may give it all the fair play imaginable, endeavour to represent it in its full force, and to its best advantage : Bellarmine makes it thus to speak for itself: "The Apostle in 1 Cor. iii. 4, makes it the sign and mark of schismatics to be called after the name of particular men, though of the Apostles themselves, whether of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas : and in the writings of the ancient Fathers, the orthodox Churches were known and distinguished by the name of catholic ; and the conventicles of schismatics and heretics, by the names of their first authors. And therefore since the Church of Rome is by all, even her bitterest adversaries, called catholic, and the several sects of the Reformed after the names of their particular doctors, as Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, and the like ; it follows that the name of catholic is not only a sure undoubted mark of the true Church, but also that this Church of Rome is that Church : " this is his argument ; and as much as he values his Church upon it, I can see no more in it but this, that because Churches professing the true orthodox faith, were anciently styled catholic, therefore all that have been styled catholic since, be their faith what it will, must be true and orthodox Churches : and because the Apostle forbids Christians to be called after the name of particular men, though of never so great eminency in the Church ; and those mentioned in the works of the ancients were really schismatics and heretics, that were so called, as the Valentinians, Marcionites, Montanists, and others : therefore all that in after ages shall be so nicknamed, though out of malice and ill will by their enemies, whilst they disown it themselves, must go for schismatics and heretics. This is so weak a topic, that I might justly break off here, having exposed it sufficiently by a bare representing of it : yet for the reader's farther information and satisfaction in this matter, I shall proceed to shew these three things :—

I. *In what respect the name of Catholic was esteemed by some of the Fathers in their time a Note of a catholic Church, and in what respects it will ever be a standing Note of it.*

II. *That from the bare name of Catholic, no argument can be drawn to prove a Church to be Catholic.*

III. *That the Church of Rome, having egregiously corrupted the true catholic faith, neither is nor deserves the name of a Catholic Church.*



I. *In what respect the name of Catholic was esteemed by some of the Fathers in their time, a Note of the catholic Church.*

And this, as evidently appears from their writings, and even from those testimonies cited by Bellarmine, was upon the account of the catholic faith; that in their time was generally and for the most part in conjunction with the name of Catholic; and whenever it is so, it will be an infallible note of a catholic Church. The catholic faith is that which was delivered by Christ himself to his Apostles, and by them to the Church, contained in those writings, which they by the extraordinary direction and assistance of the Holy Ghost, indited and commended to the care and keeping of all the Churches planted by them, as a sure unerring rule of faith and manners; called Catholic, both as it contains all things in it necessary to salvation, and as it was to be preached and published in all times, and successively in all places: according to Vincentius Lirinensis. Rule, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est*: it set out at Jerusalem, but was not to stop there, but from thence to spread itself into all parts of the world. The Apostles were first to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but not to them only: "Go, teach all nations," was our Saviour's commission to the Apostles; and "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance," was God's promise to our Saviour. The Christian Church was not to be confined to the limits of one nation, like that of the Jews, within the small territories of Judea, but to be made up of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

Now in the first ages of Christianity, before the main body of the Church was divided, only some few misled and seduced people separating from it, it being generally true, that they that bore the name of catholic, professed the true catholic faith, and those that were called after the name of particular men had depraved and corrupted it; the very name catholic became a distinguishing note of a true Church, and to be called after the name of the author of any sect, the mark of an heretical and schismatical one; but yet this was not so much for the sake of the bare names, as for the things, the tenets and doctrines signified by them. In this sense are all those Fathers to be understood, quoted by Bellarmine and others, who seem to lay any stress upon the name: it was

upon the account of the true catholic faith, which in those times did for the most part, if not everywhere, accompany and go along with the name : thus when St. Cyril of Jerusalem\* advised his catechumens, when they should go into any city, to inquire for the catholic Church, he gave this reason for it, " Because there the true catholic faith is taught ;" and in the same place adds, " the Church is therefore called catholic, because it teaches all those truths all men are bound to know in order to salvation : " and upon the same account, Pacianus† not unfitly said, " Christian is my name, and Catholic my surname ; by the one I am distinguished from heathens, by the other from heretics and schismatics : " because in that age few or none went by the name of Catholic, but those that were so indeed, and professed the true catholic faith. And as this is a true account of the original of the name Catholic, and the weight that was laid upon it in those early times, so will the name ever continue to be a sure and unerring note of the catholic Church, whilst it is inseparably conjoined with the profession of the catholic faith : where this is taught and professed, there is a true Church ; where this fails in part or in whole, the Church decays, or is lost.

II. *No argument can be drawn from the bare name of Catholic, to prove a Church to be catholic.*

This is so clear and evident in itself, that it neither needs nor is scarce capable of a proof : " The Church of Rome is called Catholic, therefore she is catholic : the Papists are called Catholics, therefore they are catholics." This is such a way of reasoning, that every man must be ashamed to own, but those who have the confidence to say anything, when they are not able to say anything to the purpose. For,

1. The Christian Church was not known by the name of Catholic at the beginning ; and therefore it can be no essential note of it. We find no mention of this name in the writings of the New Testament : we read, " That the disciples were called Christians at Antioch ; " but the name Catholic, principally respecting the diffusive nature of the Church, the Church could not properly be so called, till the Christian faith had been more generally and universally preached in the world : therefore Pacianus, in the fore-quoted place, confesses, that

\* Cap. 18. Catech. [Catech. 18. s. 26. p. 297, 298. Venet. 1763.]

† Epist. ad Sympron. de Nom. Cath. [Bibl. Patr. vol. 7. p. 259. col. 1.]

the name Catholic was not used in the Church in the days of the Apostles; and from thence some have concluded, that the Creed which goes under the Apostles' name, having this denomination of the Church inserted in it, Catholic Church, was not composed by them, but by some holy bishops of a later standing in the Church; yet must it be confessed, that the name is very ancient, and of an early date, it being found in the Oriental Creeds, particularly those of Jerusalem and Alexandria, and in the inscriptions of St. James, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude's Epistles, which are all styled general or catholic Epistles.

2. Names are oftentimes arbitrarily and at random, and falsely imposed on things; and therefore nothing can be concluded from them: the Church of Sardis had a name to live, but was dead: the Church of Laodicea gloried that she was rich, but was poor; many on earth are called gods, who are but mortal men; Simon Magnus was called the great power of God, but was a child of the devil; Mahomet a great prophet, but was an impostor; Diana the great goddess of the Ephesians, but was an idol; our blessed Saviour foretold that many should come in his name, each saying, "I am Christ," but were deceivers. Thus, you see, things and persons are not always as they are called; nor do I believe the Papists are willing that their Church should be thought in reality to be, according to the signification of some names that are too liberally bestowed upon her; the Bishop of Rome calls himself Christ's vicar, but others, "Antichrist;" the Church of Rome styles herself the Catholic Church, but others, "the whore of Babylon." I do as little justify the fastening such odious names upon them, as approve their arrogating to themselves the other glorious titles; yet this I am pretty well assured of, that a man of ordinary abilities may say as much to prove the Pope, Antichrist, and the Romish Church, an harlot; as the whole college can justify the pretence of the one to be Christ's vicar, or of the other to be his undefiled spouse.

3. Names are oftentimes imposed on things, and so used, as marks of distinction only, without any farther design of representing their natures and qualities by them: thus we call the Romanists Catholics; not that we think they are truly so, but in compliment, or irony, in compliance with common use, or by way of discrimination from other Christians; and in the same respects, it may be supposed, that they call us the Reformed: and if they think this is a good argu-

ment to prove them Catholics, we have the same, and it will hold as strong, to prove us Reformed. They call us Reformed, therefore we are Reformed, is as good an argument as, we call them Catholics, therefore they are Catholics. In this sense are those words of St. Austin,\* cited by Bellarmine, to be understood: "That should a stranger happen in any city to inquire even of an heretic, where he might go to a catholic Church; the heretic would not dare to send him to his own house or oratory." Not that that heretic did believe, that those that were there called Catholics, did hold the true catholic doctrine, for then he could not have believed his own; but looking upon it as a bare name of distinction, he directed him to that assembly of Christians that were so called. St. Austin seems here to suppose a case, as if a traveller entering into a city, where both Popish and Reformed Churches were allowed, and should chance to meet a Protestant, and of him inquire the way to a Catholic Church, and he direct him to a Popish one; or a Papist, and of him inquire the way to a Reformed Church, and he direct him to a Protestant one: it would not therefore follow, that either the one or the other did believe either Church to answer and correspond with its name, that the Popish was Catholic, or the Protestant Reformed; but that they were words of vulgar use, whereby they might be known from one another, but not the true Church from the false.

4. It does not follow, that because the name of Catholic in that time, when it was for the most part in conjunction with the catholic faith, was a sure note of a true Church, it must always be so, even when the name and thing are parted. It was not long before the Christian Church became miserably torn and rent asunder, divided into many and very great bodies, all pretending to catholicism. By what mark now is the catholic Church to be known? Not by the name surely, when all parties laid claim to it, and the grossest heretics, such as the Manichæans themselves, as St. Austin tells us, who had the least to shew for it, coveted and gloried in it. Have never any heretics or schismatics been styled Catholics? Nor ever any orthodox styled heretics? The Greek Church is called Catholic, and yet the Church of Rome will have her an heretical one: the Donatists appropriated to themselves that ample title; and yet St. Austin thought them no better than schis-

\* Cont. Epist. Fundam. c. 4. [vol. 8. col. 153. Par. 1688.]



matics: the Arians called themselves Catholics, and the orthodox, Homousians and Athanasians; but neither the one was the more, nor the other the less catholic for what they were called. Truth is always the same, and the nature of things remains unalterable, let men fix on them what names they please: by this rule then is the true Church to be known, not because it bears the name of Catholic, for that a Church may do, and yet be guilty of schism and heresy, but because it professes the true faith, and then though it be in name heretic, it is in reality catholic: this is Lactantius's rule,\* to discern the true Church by the true religion: "That Church alone," says he, "is catholic, that retains the true worship of God." And St. Austin,† in his disputes with the Donatists, where the true Church was, appeals to the Scripture, as the only infallible judge: amongst many others to this purpose, he hath these words, "I say this, and thou sayest that, but thus saith the Lord."

5. Again, does it follow, that because the being called after the names of particular men, in that age, when all so called were, for the most part, corrupt in the faith, was a sure brand of schismatics and heretics, it must ever be so? May not names and titles be unjustly and maliciously imposed? If the Churches of the Reformed must go for heretics and schismatics merely because they are distinguished by the names of those men that were the first and most eminent instruments in that blessed work, as of Lutherans, Calvinists, Zuinglians, and the like; is there not the same reason, that the several orders in the Church of Rome, that go under the names of their particular founders, as the Benedictines, Franciscans, Dominicans, Jansenists, and Molinists, and others, be esteemed so too? If there be any difference, the advantage of reason is on our side; since the Reformed assume not those names to themselves, and though they deservedly honour the memories of those men, and with thankful hearts embrace the Reformation, God was pleased by their ministry to make in the Church, yet do they by no means affect to be called after their names: they own no name but Christian or Catholic, when it signifies persons adhering to the true catholic faith: the others are nick-names

\* Instit. lib. iv. c. ult. Sola catholica est quæ verum cultum retinet. [vol. 1. p. 293. Wirceb. 1783.]

† Non audiamus, hæc dico, hæc dicis, sed audiamus, hæc dicit Dominus, &c. Ibi quæramus Ecclesiam. Epist. 166. [Ut supra, vol. 2. col. 301.] De Unit. Eccl. c. 2. [Ibid. vol. 8. col. 340.]

fastened on them by their adversaries out of scorn or malice, to represent them to the world, as far as they are able, as so many schismatics from the catholic Church, and as having other leaders than Christ and his Apostles : but those in the Church of Rome that are denominated from their particular founders, give themselves those appellations, and seem to prefer them before that truly catholic one of Christian, which while with some neglect they leave to the common people, they glory and pride themselves in the other ; so that if this note of a heretic is valid, it turns with great force against themselves, who are really guilty of it, and not against us, whom they will make guilty of it, but are not.

III. *The Church of Rome having egregiously corrupted the catholic faith or religion, neither is nor deserves the name of a catholic Church.*

Whether she is guilty of this or not, will be best seen, by comparing her doctrine in several points with that delivered by Christ, and left upon record by his holy Apostles ; for though the Church of Rome will not allow the Scriptures to be the whole and perfect rule of faith and manners, yet they acknowledge them to be the Word of God ; and granting that, they must acknowledge that all those doctrines and practices that are forbidden by them, are corruptions and depravations of it. Let us then bring their faith to the touch-stone ; how readest thou ?

The Scripture says, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."\* Matth. iv. 10. Which words evidently appropriate all kinds, and all degrees of religious worship unto God, they being an answer to the devil's temptation, who required but the lowest degree ; the devil acknowledging the right he had of disposing of the kingdoms of the world to be only derivative, not natural (they were delivered to me),

The Church of Rome says, that angels and saints are to be worshipped and prayed unto.—Catech. Rom. par. 3. c. 2. n. 8, 9. [par. 3. cap. 16. p. 355. Mechl. 1831.]

Though with an inferior kind of worship, not the same that is given to God.—Ibid.

\* See Discourse of the Object of Religious Worship. 1685.

at the same time confessed himself not to be the supreme God, and consequently cannot be supposed to claim the highest degree of worship.

The Scripture says, "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?"\* Making God alone the object of prayer, who is the only object of men's faith and confidence. Rom. x. 14.

The Scripture says, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all."† 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

The Scripture says, as it is in the second Commandment, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing, &c. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them,"‡ Exod. xx. 4. Where, we see, all use of images in the worship of God, whether carved or painted, are expressly forbidden, without any exception or distinction.

The Scripture commands all persons indifferently, "to read, to search, to meditate on the

The Church of Rome says, "It is good and profitable to pray to saints and angels."—Concil. Trid. sess. 25. de Invocationat.

The Church of Rome prays to saints as intercessors, and teaches that God bestows many favours upon men by their "merit, grace, and intercession."—Catech. Rom. par. 3. c. 2. n. 12. [par. 3. cap. 24. p. 357, ut supra.]

The Church of Rome requires, "That due worship and veneration be given to them, such as kissing, uncovering the head, and falling down before them;" and denounces a curse against those that think otherwise.—Concil. Trid. sess. 25. [p. 211. Paris. 1832.] Catech. Rom. par. 3. c. 2. n. 24. And then to cover the shame and guilt of this, adds the second commandment to the first, and by making it of the same sense with that, makes it to have none of its own, nor of any signification.

The Church of Rome allows not this liberty to the laity, but upon license, that is not

\* See Discourse concerning Invocation of Saints. 1684.

† Two others in 1686.

‡ See particular Examination of Monsieur de Meaux in the Articles of Invocation of Saints, and Worship of Images. 1686.

Scriptures, that the Word of God dwell in them richly in all wisdom."\* Luke xvi. 29. John v. 39. Psal. i. 2. Col. iii. 16.

The Scripture expressly forbids prayers in an unknown tongue, as altogether unprofitable and unedifying in the Church, 1 Cor. xiv. 2, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men;"† ver. 11, "If I know not the meaning of the voice, he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me;" ver 16, "When thou shalt bless with the Spirit (by the gift of an unknown tongue) how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say, Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?"

The Scripture says, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours," Rev. xiv. 13. "To-day," said our Saviour to the repenting thief on the cross,

easily to be obtained, and says, "that more hurt than good comes by the reading of them."—Reg. Ind. Libr. Prohib. Reg. 4. [p. 279. Paris. 1832.] Nay, a liberty to read them under such a restriction was thought too much, and therefore the faculty of granting such licenses was, by the order of Pope Clement VIII. quite taken away.—Reg. Ind. Libr. Prohib. Auct. Sexti 5. et Clem. 8. Obser. circa 4. regul.

The Church of Rome strictly enjoins such and no other, *viz.* in the Latin tongue, and denounces a curse against those, who say, "that Divine service ought to be administered only in the vulgar tongue."—Concil. Trident. sess. 22. c. 8, and can. 9. Hereby making the people perform to God an unreasonable service, whilst it takes from them the knowledge of the prayers offered in their name, and suffers them not to understand their own desires.

The Church of Rome says, that souls who die in a state of grace, but are not sufficiently purged from their sins, "go first into purgatory," a place of torment bordering

\* See Treatise on Search the Scriptures. 1685. As also the Lay Christian's Obligation to read the Scriptures. 1687.

† See Discourse of Divine Service in an unknown Tongue. 1685.



“shalt thou be with me in Paradise,” Luke xxiii. 43. And Paradise is acknowledged by them to be a place of peace and joy.—Bellar. de Sanct. Beat. l. 1. c. 3. Test. 4.

The Scripture says, “That the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin,” 1 John i. 7. And that God for Christ’s sake hath “forgiven us all our trespasses,” Eph. iv. 32. Col. ii. 13.

The Scripture says, That when our Saviour instituted the blessed sacrament of his body and blood,\* he commanded it to be administered and received in both kinds, the cup as well as the bread, saying, “Drink ye all of it,” Matth. xxvi. 27. Neither were the disciples any more priests

near upon hell; from which yet their deliverance may be expedited by the suffrages, that is, prayers, alms, and masses, said and done by the faithful that are alive, in their behalf.—Bellar. de Purgat. l. 2. c. 6. Catech. Rom. par. 1. c. 6. n. 3. Concil. Trid. sess. 25. Decret. de Purgat. [Doctrina de Purgatorio, p. 209, ut supra.] Now how “this resting from their labours and being in Paradise,” can be consistent with the pains and fire of purgatory, which Bellarmine tells us is hotter than hell itself, is past my apprehension.

The Church of Rome says, that souls are to continue in purgatory till they have made full satisfaction for their sins, and are thoroughly purged from them; and that whoever says, that there is no debt of temporal punishment to be paid either in this world, or in purgatory, before they can be admitted into heaven, is accursed.—Concil. Trid. sess. 6. can. 30.

The Church of Rome says the cup is not to be administered to the laity, and gives many reasons for it, “lest the blood of Christ should be spilt; lest the wine kept for the sick should fret; lest wine may not always be had, or lest some may not be able to bear the smell or taste of it.” Whether

\* See Discourse of the Communion in one Kind, in Answer to Monsieur de Meaux. 1687.

when they took the cup, than when they received the bread; for if they were made priests by our Saviour's pronouncing these words, "Do this in remembrance of me;" they became so, before they had taken, at least before they had eaten the bread, as well as before they had received the cup; it not appearing that Christ made any pause betwixt his saying, "Take, eat, this is my body," and his saying, "Do this in remembrance of me," but spake them as it were in a breath, as one continued sentence; and then upon this account the whole sacrament, the bread as well as the wine, must belong only to the priests.

The Scripture says, that the bread and wine in the sacrament, even after consecration, are bread and wine still,\* 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27. And it is very evident, that when our Saviour said, "This is my body,"† he meant it only as the representation of his body; a manner of speech well understood by the Jews, who commonly said the same thing of the Paschal Lamb: they called it the Body of the Passover, when as it was but the memorial, a figure usual in sacraments, and indeed essential to them.

these are sufficient reasons or no, the Council of Trent enjoins all to believe them so, under an anathema.—Concil. Trid. sess. 21. can. 1 et 2. The Council of Constance acknowledges that our Saviour instituted the sacrament in both kinds, and that it so continued in the Church of Rome many centuries, and yet, with a *notwithstanding* to both these, it sacrilegiously robs the people of the cup. Concil. Constan. sess. 13.

The Church of Rome says, that the bread and wine in the eucharist, by the priests pronouncing these words, *hoc est corpus meum*, is transubstantiated into the natural body and blood of Christ; the species or accidents only of the bread and wine remaining, and hath made it an article to be believed by all under an anathema.—Concil. Trid. sess. 13. de Real. Præs. c. 1. Cornel. a Lapide tells us, that it was the opinion of some of their grave divines, that this change is made after so powerful and effectual

\* See Discourse of Transubstantiation. 1685.

† Another of the Real Presence, &c. in Answer to two Discourses from Oxford, 1687.

manner, that if Christ had not been incarnated before, the force of this charm would have incarnated him, and clothed him with human nature.

*Adeò potenter et efficaciter, ut si Christus necdum esset incarnatus, per hæc verba (hoc est corpus meum) incarnaretur, corpusque humanum assumeret.*—Cornel. a Lapid. Com. in Esa. c. 7.

The Scripture says, "That Christ needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, &c., for this he did once, when he offered up himself," Heb. vii. 27. "And that without shedding of blood is no remission," Heb. ix. 22.

The Church of Rome says, "That in the sacrifice of the mass Christ is offered as often as that is celebrated; and that though therein he be unbloody offered, yet it is a true propitiatory sacrifice for the sins both of the living and dead."—Concil. Trid. sess. 22. cap. 1. And declares the person accused that denies any part of this.—Ibid.

In all these particulars, you see (and several other might be instanced in) the faith and doctrine of the Church of Rome bears a manifest repugnance to the Gospel of Christ. Now, if the Holy Scripture may be allowed so much as to be a rule of faith and manners in those things it particularly treats of, the Church of Rome contradicting that rule in those things, must be condemned for a corrupter of the Christian faith or doctrine. And having thus made it evident, that she holds not the true catholic faith, it is as evident that she is not, and consequently deserves not to be called, a catholic Church.

THE  
SECOND NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED,  
VIZ.  
ANTIQUITY.

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*Secunda Nota est ANTIQUITAS.*—Bellar. Lib. iv. cap. v. de  
Notis Ecclesiæ.

It is a shrewd sign that a Church is in an ill case, when the most learned and witty defenders of it, commend it to the world by such marks and characters, whereby they say it may be known, as are neither proper to it alone, nor in truth belong to it; but more fully and evidently belong to them whom they oppose.

That this is the case of the present Church of Rome, in that famous note of Antiquity, which Bellarmine and others make a mark of the true Church, I will clearly and distinctly demonstrate by shewing these three things.

I. *That the plea of bare Antiquity is not proper to the Church, but common to it with other societies of false religion.*

II. *That true Antiquity is not on the side of the present Roman Church. But,*

III. *That it is truly on ours.*

I. It is confessed by all, even by them who make antiquity a mark of the Church, that the notes of a thing must be proper to that of which they are a note, and not common to it with other things: which quite destroys this note of antiquity, upon a double account.

First, Because that which is proper to a thing is inseparable from it, and did ever belong to it since it had a being; and can at no time, without the destruction of its being, be absent from it. This every fresh-man in learning knows; and by that may know, that antiquity is not a note proper to the Church, because it did not always belong to the Church: for there was a time when the Church was new. Which was objected to it by the adversaries of our religion; and the defenders of the Church answered the very same to them then, that we do to the Romanists now; as will appear in the second thing I have to observe.



Secondly, That other societies have laid claim to this note, and it could not be denied them; and therefore it is not a proper note, whereby the true Church may be certainly known, being common to it with others that are not of the Church.

1. For, first, the Samaritans claimed it against the Jews, as appears from the woman's discourse with our Saviour, John iv. 20: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," &c. They had done so for many ages before they worshipped in Jerusalem. For here God appeared unto Abraham, who here also built an altar when he came first out of Chaldea, Gen. xii. 6, 7. Here Jacob likewise built an altar when he came out of Mesopotamia, Gen. xxxiii. 20. Here there was a sanctuary in the days of Joshua, who gave his last charge to Israel, and made a covenant with them in this place, chap. xxiv. 25, 26. Here the patriarchs were buried, ver. 32. Nay, hereabouts was Shiloh, Judg. xxi. 19; where, by the order of Joshua, the tabernacle and the ark of God were settled, long before it was brought to Jerusalem, Josh. xviii. 1, 2, which was all this time in the hands of the Jebusites. To which plea the Jews could not make an answer, but by maintaining this principle: that not the antiquity of place, but the authority of God's precept, was to be their direction in this case. And God, it appeared by the holy books, had chosen Jerusalem to place his name there.

2. Thus the Jews themselves argued against Christ, that he did not follow the tradition of the elders, which had been derived to them from ancient times, Mark vii. 1, &c., and against Christians, whom they called the sect of the Nazarenes, Acts xxiv. 5; as much as to say, heretics newly sprung up from Jesus of Nazareth.

3. And thus the Pagans argued against them both; particularly against the Christians, saying to St. Paul at Athens, "May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?" Acts xvii. 19. And in after-times calling it a novel religion, a novel name; and disputing that their religion was the truer, because they were strengthened and defended by the authority of antiquity.

So we read in Arnobius,\* and in Symmachus,† and Prudentius,‡ and many others whom I omit; contenting myself

\* Lib. 2.

† Ad Valentin. Theodos. et Arcad.

‡ In Agone Romani Martyris.

with St. Austin alone, because he gives a most pertinent answer to this poor pretence, which will as well serve us against the Papists, as it did him against the Pagans.\* Who contended that what they held was true, because of its antiquity. "As if," saith he, "antiquity, or ancient custom, should carry it against the truth. Thus murderers, adulterers, and all wicked men, may defend their crimes, for they are ancient practices, and began at the beginning of the world. Though from hence they ought rather to understand their error, because that which is reprehensible and filthy, is thereby proved to have been ill begun, &c., nor can it be made honest and unreprouable, by having been done long ago."

But this is a part of the devil's craft and subtlety (as he excellently observes in the same place), "who, as he invented those false worships, and sprinkled some juggling tricks to draw men into them; so he took such course, that in process of time the fallacy was commended, and the filthy invention was excused by being derived from antiquity: for, by long custom, that began not to seem filthy, which was so in itself. The irrational vulgar began to worship demons, or dead men, who appeared to them as if they had been gods; which worship being drawn down into custom of long continuance, thinks thereby to be defended, as if it were the truth of reason. Whereas the reason of truth is not from custom (which is from antiquity), but from God; who is proved to be God, not by long continuance (or antiquity) but by eternity."

Let this be applied to our present business, and it is sufficient to shew, that bare antiquity cannot be a note of truth: for there are very ancient errors. Which is so evident, that it is a wonder such a man as Bellarmine was, should let this pass the muster among the notes he reckons up, of the truth of his Church; which he could intend for no more than to make a show, not for any substantial service: of which this is a demonstration, that he had no sooner named Antiquity as the second note of the Church, but, discerning it would stand him in no stead, he immediately sets it aside, and cunningly slides to another thing; for thus he argues:† "Without doubt the true Church is ancients than the false; as God was before the devil: and consequently we read the good seed was sown first before the tares."

\* Quæst. ex Vet. et Novo Testamento. Q. cxiv. [vol. 16. fol. 520.] Bassan. 1797.]

† L. 4. de Ecclesia, c. 5. [vol. 2. p. 102. col. 1. Prag. 1721.]

But who doth not see that these two things are widely different, the one from the other, antiquity and priority : that which is ancient, and that which is first? Whatsoever it first is undoubtedly true ; but whatsoever is ancient, is not always so, unless it be of such antiquity that it be also first. There is a double antiquity, therefore, one in respect of us ; the other absolute and in itself. This last sort of antiquity is the same with what is first : unto which we are desirous to go, to which we are willing to stand, and by which we would be judged. By the rule which Tertullian lays down in several of his books,\* we would fain bring our cause and Church to be tried : “ that is truest which was first ; that first, which was from the beginning ; that from the beginning, which was from the Apostles : and in like manner, that from the Apostles, which in the Churches of the Apostles was most sacred,” viz. that which they read in their holy writings. “ This is our antiquity (as he speaks in his famous Apology), *præstructa divinæ literaturæ*,† built before upon the divine learning. This is the rule of faith which came from Christ, transmitted to us by his companions ; to whom all those who speak otherwise will be found to be of later date.”

But to this they of the Church of Rome will by no means agree ; they do not like to be tried only by the Holy Scriptures, which is the true antiquity ; that is undoubtedly first, before all other traditions. A very bad sign this ; an infallible note all is not right among them, that they dare not abide by the Scriptures, but cry up other traditions ; that is, boast of what is later, not what is first. And what is after the first, though it could be proved to be of great antiquity, cannot certainly be relied on ; because there are errors and heresies so ancient, that they sprung up presently after the first truth.

Mere antiquity, therefore, is not a good proof. For though the devil be not first, yet he is of great antiquity, being the old (ὁ ἀρχαῖος), that ancient serpent, who was a liar, as well as a murderer, “ from the beginning.” And was so crafty, as in process of time, to make use of this argument, that he was the Ancient of Days, that is, God. And if there had not been something else, whereby he might have been discovered to be a serpent, who could have contradicted him ? or confuted his

\* L. 4. contra Marcion. c. 5. [p. 415. Par. 1695.] adv. Praxeam. c. 2. [Ibid. p. 501.] De Præscript. c. xxx. [Ibid. p. 213.]

Apologia, c. xlvii. [Ibid. p. 36.]

doctrine and worship, if they had been to be tried by bare antiquity? Which is a proof so insufficient, that God himself, as ye heard before out of St. Austin, "is not proved to be God by antiquity, but by eternity."

Truth and error were born so near together, that after a long tract of time, they could not be distinguished merely by their age. No sooner was man created, but this serpent, by his subtlety, beguiled Eve. And immediately after our redemption, he attempted again to "corrupt men's minds from the simplicity that is in Christ," 2 Cor. xi. 3. 1 Thess. iii. 5. And accordingly, as there was a "Church of Christ," so there was, together therewith, a "synagogue of Satan," Rev. iii. 9. There were "depths of Satan" also, and a "mystery of iniquity" (which wrought even in the Apostles' days), as well as a "mystery of godliness," and the "deep things of God." Which wicked doctrines running down to posterity, made use, at length, of the plea of antiquity, to give them countenance and support. Nor could it be denied, though it was proved to be a mere deceit. For it was refuted by the Fathers in such remarkable words as these (which give a deadly blow to the like plea of the present Roman Church): "Custom, without truth, is but the antiquity of error. And there is a short way for religious and simple minds to find out what is truth: for if we return to the beginning and original of divine tradition, human error ceases. Thither let us return to our Lord's original, the evangelical beginning, the apostolical tradition: and hence let the reason of our act arise, from whence order and the beginning arose."

"If therefore Christ alone is to be heard, we ought not to regard, what another before us thought fit to be done, but what Christ, who is before all, first did. For we ought not to follow the custom of man, but the truth of God; since God himself speaks thus by the Prophet Isaiah, In vain do they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men. Which very words our Lord again repeats in the Gospel, Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." Thus St. Cyprian.\*

With whom Tertullian (whom he was wont to call his master),† agrees in many memorable sayings: "Nobody can pre-

\* Epist. lxi. ad Cæcilium Fratrem, [p. 155.] et lxxiv. ad Pompeium, [p. 215.] Ed. Oxon. [1682.]

† L. de Veland. Virg. c. l. [ut supra, p. 172.]



scribe against the truth ; neither space of times, nor the patronages of persons, nor the privileges of countries. From which things indeed, custom having gotten a beginning, by ignorance or simplicity, and being grown strong by succession, pleads against truth. But our Lord Christ calls himself the Truth, not custom. Nor doth novelty so much confute heresy as truth. Whatsoever is against truth, that will be heresy, even old custom."

"Truth doth not stand in need of old custom to make it be believed, nor doth heresy fear the charge of novelty. That which is plainly false, is made generous by antiquity. For why should I not call that false, whose proof is false? Why should I believe Pythagoras, who tells lies, that he may be believed?"\*

I omit all the rest ; having said enough to shew, that if antiquity itself be to be credited, we ought not to depend on antiquity alone, but seek for ancient truth.

Which leads me to the second thing I undertook to shew : that the present Church of Rome vainly pretends to true antiquity, *i. e.* to ancient truth.

II. The antiquity of a Church doth not consist in the antiquity of the place where it is seated : for a new worship may come into an ancient place of worship ; as the new altar of Ahaz was introduced into the temple at Jerusalem, where he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, 2 Kings xvi. 2 Chron. xxviii. 23. Nor doth it consist merely in the antiquity of its founders : for the Apostles founded many Churches, which had all the same title to antiquity in this regard ; and yet continued not such Churches as they left them, but decayed (some of them) so fast, that what truth and goodness remained among them, was ready to die, even before all the Apostles were dead, Rev. iii. 2. But it is true, antiquity consists in the preservation of the ancient truth, entire and uncorrupted, which it received from the Apostles, and which made it, at first, to be a Church.

Those things are truly ancient, which persist in the same thing, after a long tract of time, wherein they were at the beginning. For if they have suffered any change in that which belongs to their being and constitution, they have lost their antiquity, and become another thing than they were at the first. Now, to know this, we must inquire into the nature of

\* L. de Anima, c. xxviii. [Ibid. p. 285.]

the thing itself and understand (for instance) what it is that makes a society to be the Church of God. And all agree it is the Christian truth: in which, if it have suffered alteration (that is, doth not hold the same Christian doctrine it did at the beginning, but hath introduced errors and lies under the pretence of ancient truth), it is not the same Church it was at first; and therefore hath not that mark of true antiquity which will prove it to be such as it pretends.

Now that this is the case of the present Church of Rome, is evident by that alteration they have made in the ancient Creed; unto which they have added as many more articles as there were at the first, and thereby made such a change in their Church (for a change is made by adding, as well as taking away), as makes it not to be the same ancient Church which the Apostles founded at the beginning.

This charge they have no way to avoid, nor can by any other means maintain, that they are such an ancient Church as Christ and his Apostles settled, but by this ratiocination, as Bellarmine calls it. That in all great changes of religion, these six things may be ever shewn: 1. The author of that change. 2. The new doctrine that was brought in. 3. The time when it began. 4. The place where. 5. Who opposed it. 6. And who joined themselves to it. None of which can be shewn in the Church of Rome, since the Apostles' times; and therefore there hath been no change at all made in it, but it remains the same it was at first, without any alteration.

Which is a reasoning built upon grounds so notoriously false, that it scarce deserves the name of a poor piece of sophistry.

1. For first, It is contrary to all history and experience; which shews us there have been great changes, the authors and the beginnings, &c. of which cannot now be known: though no man can doubt there hath been an alteration made. For the body spiritual and civil too, is like the body natural: in which as there are some diseases which make such a violent and sudden assault, that one may say at what moment they began: so there are other, which grow so insensibly, and by such slow degrees, that none can tell when the first alteration was made, and by what accident, from a good habit of body to a bad. Thus we are sure a man is in a deep consumption, when we see him worn away to skin and bone, though nobody can tell the precise time when, nor by what means, nor where and in what company his blood began to be tainted. And thus we are sure there is a gangrene (as St. Paul calls

heresy), when we see it corrode the body of the Church ; though it crept in so secretly at the first, and so indiscernibly, that it was not suspected, nor can always be traced to its first occasion and original. No, the tares in the field (which is another example whereby our Lord himself illustrates this matter) had taken root before they were espied ; for they were sown in the night, while men slept (and could take no notice of it), so that all that could be known, was this, that his enemy had done it : that is, the tares were not from our Saviour, nor were first sown ; but were of a later and quite different original : but by what particular instrument the enemy sowed them, at what hour of the night, by what hand, and when, did not appear ; for the matter was carried so secretly, and in the dark, that the servants, who knew of the sowing of the good seed in the field, wondered to see the bad, and asked, “ Whence hath it tares ? ” They did not know, that is, how they came there, no more than we may be able now to know, how errors came into the Church : but that they were there they knew and were sure ; as we are sure there are false doctrines in the Church of Rome, that were not of our Saviour’s planting.

2. Nor do the examples whereby they illustrate this ratiocination, serve to any purpose, but to shew the falseness of it. They can name, they say, the authors and beginnings of all the ancient heresies ; for instance, the heresy which affirmed there were two persons in Christ, was begun by Nestorius in the year 431. Which is not true ; for though then it took its name from so great a bishop, who maintained it, yet the heresy had been before, from an unknown beginning ; it being mentioned by St. Ambrose in the foregoing age, in his book of the Incarnation. The like may be said of the Arian heresy ; whose beginning they date in the year 324, but it was born long before among the Gnostic heretics ; and only got reputation by so noted a man as Arius. Nay, some of the learnedest doctors in the present Roman Church, have taken a great deal of pains to make the world believe, that Tertullian and a number of other ancient Fathers, were infected with it. So uncertain they are in their discourses about these matters.

3. Which, if they were true, would uphold the greatest impieties. For what will become of the Christian religion, if the traditional law of the Jews be true ? And according to this way of reasoning, it must pass for truth, that it came from Mount Sinai by word of mouth, as the written law did ; for none can shew its original, much less name the authors of the

several traditions, and who opposed them, &c. Nay, the worship of the heathen gods was supported by this argument, as is excellently observed by Clemens Alexandrinus, who tells the Gentiles, “that fables and time had advanced dead men into the number of the gods. For though things present, being familiar to us, are neglected, yet those which are past and gone, being out of the reach of confutation, χρόνον ἀδηλία, by the obscurity and uncertainty of times, have honour invented for them. By which means those that are dead long ago, glorying τῷ πολλῷ τῆς πλάνης χρόνῳ, in a long time of error, are accounted gods by posterity.”\*

The same may be said for the lying oracles among them; the beginnings and first authors of which cannot be traced.

4. But we have an instance of this in the Roman Church itself; where there is an acknowledged change, and yet they themselves are not able to tell who first began it, because it crept in by insensible degrees. The communion, I mean, in one kind, was not used for above a thousand years; but being begun in some churches (they themselves cannot tell which, nor when) grew to be a general custom not long before the Council of Constance in these western parts of the world; and there was established as a law. But it did not begin by the decree of any bishop, nor was carried on by any public order, and if you ask them, who first set it on foot, they will tell you that doth not appear.

Therefore the second alone of those six things being proved, that new doctrines and practices have been brought in, of which we are very certain, there needs none of the rest: but we are sure there was a time, and authors of them, and people that embraced them, though we should not be able (for want of ancient records that are lost, or because things that come in insensibly cannot in every age be noted and recorded) to tell the very time, and place, and persons, when and where and by whom they were introduced.

All which is not said by us, because we are not able to give an account of the other parts of that ratiocination; but only to shew the frivolousness of such discourses as these, in which they of the Church of Rome place their main retreat. For we can tell, nay, their own authors have told us, when and by whom many things were brought into their Church, which were not there in the beginning. Polydore Virgil, if I had room to

\* Admon. ad Gentes, p. 36, 37. [p. 49. Venet. 1757.]



insert his words, would furnish us with several instances. But I shall content myself with two, which were at no great distance the one from the other.

The first is their grand article of faith, about the Papal authority. We know, and have often told them, by what steps it grew to the height wherein now it is, or would be ; when the bishops of Rome began to exceed their bounds ; how they were opposed and snubbed, who (and by whom) was first declared the Universal Bishop and Head of the Church. Victor began the dance ; Zosimus, after some others, followed it ; Boniface continued it ; Celestine carried it on : who met with so sharp a rebuke from the African bishops for his intrusion into their affairs, upon the pretence of a forged canon of the Nicene Council, as is sufficient to shew his ambition and craft was greater than his authority. The attempts of the rest are as notorious, and so is the opposition they met withal, till at last Boniface III. procured to himself from Phocas the title of Universal Bishop ; and to his Church the title of Head of all Churches. All this we can justify out of authentic records : but it is not in their power to name so much as one man that owned the universal jurisdiction of the Roman bishop over the whole Church, till that time ; that is, till about six hundred years after our Saviour's birth. For though Bellarmine alleges an Epistle of Justinian's, wherein he calls the Church of Rome " the head of all Churches," yet it signifies nothing, but that they are at a loss for want of proofs ; because, as it is with great reason suspected to be spurious, so it can intend no more than head of the Churches of the West ; because, in an undoubted edict of his, he calls the Church of Constantinople by the same name, " the head of all other churches," *i.e.* chief of those in the East. Which is so certain, that their own Pope Gregory, not much above a year before this arrogant title was assumed, most vehemently disdained it, or rather thundered against it. Nor can they name one man in the whole Church for so long a time, that believed their present definition of the catholic Church ; much less the power of the Pope to depose kings, which none challenged till Gregory VII., that is, till above a thousand years after our blessed Saviour. Insomuch that their forenamed champion,\* being to prove this deposing power out of ancient authors, is able to say no more than this, " I have alleged above seventy famous writers, some

\* C. Bellarm. Tract. de Potestate Summ. Pontif. p. 27.

of which flourished more than five hundred years ago." A goodly business! a glorious show of antiquity! Instead of the first five hundred years after Christ, to refer us to the last five hundred: which is to confess the novelty of their most beloved doctrine; and consequently to quit this note of antiquity, as in truth he plainly doth, in that book, where being pressed with this argument, that no such power was claimed in the first times of the Church; he answers, "That he hath not right conceptions of the Church of Christ, who admits nothing but what he reads expressly written or done in the ancient Church: for the Church of later time hath power not only to explain and declare, but constitute and command those things which belong to faith and manners." Which is as much as to say, they need not trouble themselves about antiquity; for they can make articles of faith now, which were not heard of in the beginning.

2. We have often also told them by what steps images crept into the Church. For they remained at first only in private houses, for ornament, or for commemoration, and not uncensured: there being above three hundred years passed before they came into any Church, and then not without opposition; and for this end only to be of an historical use, to remind people of things past. Which improved in three hundred years more to a rhetorical use, as we may call it, to stir up devotion in the people. For which purpose, Gregory the Great fancied they were profitable; and though he by no means allowed them to be worshipped, yet he thought the people might look upon them, and worship God before them. And this looking upon them to help devotion, was improved in the time of the second Nicene Council, into a downright worshipping of them, which would not pass in these western parts for good doctrine. And when at last (we know and have told them by what steps) this new worship advanced hither, and grew to a greater degree of religious respect than that Nicene Council admitted; the most zealous defenders of it could not agree about it, nor do they know what to make of it to this day.

We could tell them of other things that are much newer, for it is but a little more than an hundred years since unwritten traditions were decreed to be a part of the rule of faith, that is, of the Word of God. But this is sufficient to shew that they vainly boast of antiquity, which is only ancient error, and

\* C. Bellarm. *ibid.* cap. 3. p. 59.

some of it not very ancient neither. As for ancient truth, that is on our side, whom they most injuriously accuse of following novelties.

III. For the religion of the Church of England, by law established, is the true primitive Christianity: in nothing new, unless it be in rejecting all that novelty which hath been brought into the Church. But they are the cause of that; for if they had not introduced new articles, we should not have had occasion for such articles of religion as condemn them; which cannot indeed be old, because the doctrines they condemn are new, though the principle upon which we condemn them is as old as Christianity: we esteeming all to be new which was not from the beginning. For as for our positive doctrine, Polydore himself hath given a true account of it, and makes it the reason why the sect called Evangelic (as he speaks) increased so marvellously in a short time: "because they affirmed that no law was to be received, which appertains to the salvation of souls, but that which Christ or the Apostles had given."\*

And who dare say that this is a new religion, which is as old as Christ and his Apostles? With whom whosoever agree, they are truly ancient Churches, though of no longer standing than yesterday: as they that disagree with them are new, though they can run up their pedigree to the very Apostles.

Thus Tertullian discourses,† with whose words, something contracted, I shall conclude: "As the doctrine of a Church, when it is diverse from or contrary unto that of the Apostles, shews it not to be an Apostolical Church, though it pretend to be founded by an Apostle: so those Churches that cannot produce any of the Apostles, or Apostolical men for their founders (being much later, and newly constituted), yet conspiring in the same faith, are nevertheless to be accounted Apostolical Churches, because of the CONSANGUINITY of DOCTRINE."

\* L. vii. cap. 4. de Rerum Inventoribus.

† L. de Præscript. c. 32. [p. 213. Par. 1695.]

## THE THIRD NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED,

VIZ.

## DURATION.

*Tertia Nota est DURATIO DIUTURNA, nec unquam interrupta.*  
 Bellar. Lib. iv. cap. vi.

How far the Church of God is beholden to the industry of some learned men in the Church of Rome for the notes they give of a Church is not my business at present to examine: but those of the Reformed religion must acknowledge themselves obliged to them for so frankly quitting those characters which are essential to every true Church, and for taking up with such, as either apparently belong not to their Church, or belong to other Churches as well as theirs: or, lastly, such as may be found in a false Church as well as a true. This might easily be proved against them through the fifteen notes which are offered by them to the world: but I shall content myself to give an instance of it in the note of Duration, which is made by them a necessary mark of the true Church.

In prosecution of which I shall consider:

I. *What is to be understood by the term Duration.*

II. *How far Duration may be said to be a note of the true Church.*

III. *Whether the Church of Rome hath a sufficient title to this character.*

§ I. Duration, according to Bellarmine, is the continuance of a Church throughout all times without interruption; and he adds, that the catholic Church is so called, “not only because it always hath been, but also because it always will be.” So that this duration doth include in it these three things:

1. The being of a Church from the beginning.
2. The continuance of that Church to the end.
3. The continuance of that Church from the beginning to the end without interruption.

Let us now see how he applies it to the case. “It is evident,” saith he, “that our Church hath continued from the beginning of the world hitherto: or, if we speak of the state



of the New Testament, it hath endured from Christ to this year 1557." (The year when he wrote this.) But for all his beginning, "it is evident," there is no proof of what he affirms, and his assertion is very insufficient.

1. That he takes it for granted that his Church and the Christian Church are one and the same, and that there is no other true Church but his. "It is evident our Church," &c.

2. That he hath omitted two main branches of his duration, *viz.* that part of it which was to the end of the world, which is as necessary a part as that which was from the beginning : for if the Church shall not continue to be as well as it hath been, it is not that Church which duration is a note of.

Again, he hath passed by that other property of his duration, *viz.* that it hath been "without interruption." For if the Church of Rome was from the beginning, and hath continued, but not "without interruption," it wants another property of duration ; which always was, is, and always will be ; and was, and will, and must be such, "without interruption," according to him.

§ II. How far is duration a note of the true Church. We grant that there shall always be a Church of Christ upon the earth, and that the gates of hell shall never finally prevail against it, so as utterly to extinguish and destroy it : and this we firmly believe, because Christ hath promised and undertaken for it. But though this is a promise, and may support the Church under the most doleful circumstances, yet it is no note by which the true Church is to be found out and distinguished from the false. For besides that this promise doth belong to the existence of a Church, and not to this or that Church ;

1. The nature of the thing will not permit, that it should be a note. For a promise respects the time to come, but a note respects the time present. The thing promised may become a note when it is actually fulfilled, but till it be fulfilled it can no more be a note than the future time is the present. For what a promise is to the future, that is a note to the present, and doth suppose the actual existence of a thing it is the note of. And thus it is in the present case : God hath promised that he will be with his Church, and preserve it to the end of the world, but being the period of that duration is not to be accomplished till the end of the world, the world must come to an end before we can know whether the Church, pretending to duration, be the true Church. Suppose we for once Bellarmine's Church to have continued (as

he saith) for the space of 1577 years after our Saviour, and that it could be proved to a demonstration, that it so long continued to be the same without interruption; yet the time past is no proof for the time to come; and if the world should continue 1577 years after his time, and the Church nevertheless should expire before that term; the term of 1577 years past would no more answer this character of perpetual duration, than if it had endured but seven; for, as he saith, “duration doth contain in it all times, and excludes none.” And consequently if there was a time or case when that duration was interrupted (as I shall shew it was), and a time in which that Church shall cease to be before that time itself shall cease (as it may for ought they can say against it), then either their Church would not be the true Church, or duration not be the note of the true Church. For that duration including all times, the future time can be no more excluded than the time past or present; but since the future is incapable of proof, the true Church cannot be proved by it, nor can duration be a note of it.

I grant indeed, that if duration be a necessary note of the true Church; this may be a note by which those Churches that once were, but are now utterly extinguished, may be concluded not the true Church; but this negative argument will neither be able to shew which is the true Church, when there are several pretend to the like duration: nor can be a note of the true Church, for the reason before given, *viz.* “That it respecting the future succession as well as the past, it can be no note till the time to come becomes present, and the whole period of it be accomplished.”

2. That cannot be a note of the true Church, which doth not inseparably belong to the Church in all seasons and cases; for what is an essential character of a thing, belongs to that thing whenever and wherever it is: and if there be any season or case in which that note belongs not to it, that can be no true note of the thing. As for instance, the Church in one house or city immediately after our Saviour’s ascension, was as much a Church from the first day it was so gathered, and had all the qualifications of a Church, as it could have, had it been the Church of Bellarmine, and been existent 1577 years. And yet that primitive Church so constituted, wanted this note of duration; for it then but began to be. And if a person had been to inquire for the true Church by this character and token, and had been taught that that could be no

Church which wanted it, he must have gone from the upper room to the temple, and have been not a Christian, but a Jew. So that we must conclude, that either the Church at that time had not all the marks necessarily belonging to the true Church, and so indeed was no Church; or else that duration is not an inseparable note of the true Church. The former inference is good; because that which has not all the marks essentially belonging to the thing, cannot be the thing which they are the marks of; but if that Apostolical Church had all the marks essentially belonging to a true Church, and yet wanted at that time this mark of duration, then duration cannot be an essential note of the true Church, which was the second thing inferred.

3. That which is a note, must be proper to the thing which it is the note of, and not common to other things as well as that (so Bellarmine saith, cap. 2). But now this note of duration is common to other things as well as the Church, to false Churches as well as the true, and so cannot be an essential mark of the true Church, or a note by which it is distinguished and to be certainly known from the false. Suppose we that a person that has imbibed this principle, is in quest of the true Church, and had been living when Luther appeared, and had before him the Nestorians and Eutychians, the Armenians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians in the East, the numerous Church of Greece, &c. which pretend to a duration as good and sufficient as that of Rome, and the last of which is acknowledged by the Bishop of Bitonto, in the Council of Trent,\* to be “the mother of the Latin, and to which the Latin Church owes what it hath:” how shall he be able to determine where he shall fix? For to say (as Bellarmine doth)† “that they are heretics and schismatics,” and that the Greek Church, for example,‡ “was lawfully convicted of heresy and schism in three full Councils” (that is, Councils of the Church of Rome), will not make them not to have been, or that the note of duration belongs not to them. Either then they must disprove the duration of those Churches, or discharge it from being the distinguishing note of the true Church.

Lastly, I may add, if duration be the standing note of the true Church, then those could be no true Churches which

\* Orat. Concil. Trid. [Labbe, Concil. vol. 14. p. 998. Lut. Par. 1672.]

† De verbo Dei, l. 2. c. ult. [vol. 1. p. 71. col. 1. Prag. 1721.]

‡ De Not. c. 9. [c. 8.] § dico secundo. [Ibid. vol. 2. p. 110. col. 2.]

have not had that duration; and so they must unchurch the Seven Churches of Asia, &c. which have now no existence, but are utterly extinguished. For if they had been true Churches, they would have had duration, but having not duration, they could not, according to this doctrine, have ever been true Churches. But I am not willing thus to leave the subject, and shall therefore,

§ III. Consider whether the Church of Rome, after all its pretences to duration, and its establishment of this note of the true Church, has a just and sufficient claim to it.

When we would know whether a Church has this note of duration belonging to it, we must consider what there is in a Church that is capable of being tried by this character, and that is either as to place, persons, order, or doctrine; for by these it is that the Church doth exist, and is made visible; and so the Church that puts in a claim to duration, must be able to shew some evidence for it from hence, as far as she admits them for instances of that duration she pleads for.

1. As to *place*. When we hear so much of the Church of Rome, it is to be supposed that Rome is the principal seat of that Church, as well as the Pope of Rome is the head of it; but this they cannot pretend to duration in; for if we look backwards, we find not only the city of Rome frequently sacked and destroyed, and wholly depopulated, as it was by Alaricus, Gensericus, and Totylas, but even deserted by the Popes themselves, who, with their whole court, resided at Avignon for seventy years together,\* as is acknowledged. If we look forward, all that Bellarmine dares to offer upon the point, that † “the chair of St. Peter shall not be separated from Rome,” is, “that it is a pious and the most probable opinion.” But if we consult others, ‡ they say positively, “that Rome shall depart from the faith, and shall be an habitation of devils, by reason of its wickedness and idolatry, and be the seat of Antichrist.”

2. If we proceed to duration, as it respects *persons*, where shall we expect that to be entire and uninterrupted, if not in the Popes? And yet if we may judge of Popes as Bellarmine § doth of a Church, and that heresy doth nullify their

\* Bellarm. de Pontif. l. 4. c. 4. [Ibid. vol. 1. p. 455. col. 1.]

† Ibid. § Ad secundum. [p. 454. col. 2.]

‡ Vega Jesuita in Apoc. 18. com. 7. § 4. Rhem. Annot. in Apoc. p. 17. 5.

§ De Not. l. 4. c. 8. § dico secundo. [Ut supra, vol. 2. p. 110. col. 2.]



elections and successions, as it doth the verity of a Church, there is nothing more shattered. For if we look into the catalogue of them, we shall find Zepherynus a Montanist, Marcellinus sacrificing to idols, Liberius and Felix Arians, Anastasius a Nestorian, Honorius a Monothelite, John XXIII. denying a future life, with many others.

Go we on, and where shall we find more or greater schisms, one Pope cursing another, and undoing what his predecessor had done; as was the case of Formosus, Romanus, Stephanus, and Sergius. Often two Popes together were contesting for the chair (as it was for above forty years at once), and at one time three Popes had such pretences to the Papacy,\* that each had learned men for their patrons, and it could not be easily judged which of them was the true and lawful Pope, as Bellarmine himself acknowledges.

But this belongs to note five, of which more in its due place.

3. If we proceed to *order*, either in worship or discipline, the case is so notorious as to the several formularies used heretofore in that Church, that it needs not to be insisted upon, and it is impossible for them to deny it.

4. Therefore I shall proceed to *doctrine*, which indeed is the great character by which a Church is to be discovered and tried.† And here, that I may not either intrench upon what has been said before concerning the variation of the Church of Rome in this point from the Scriptures and antiquity, or prevent what may further be said upon note 9, I shall compare the Church of Rome with itself; and if I can therein prove that it is not now what it hath been in many points,‡ it will follow that it has no pretence to this note of duration; for upon this point of alteration doth Bellarmine put the issue.

*What the Church of Rome  
doth hold.*

1. The Church of Rome is the mother and mistress of all Churches, and to believe her so to be, is necessary to salvation.—Concil. Trid. Sess. 7. de Bapt. can. 2. [can. 3. Labbe, Conc. vol. 14. p. 778.] et Bulla Pii IV. [Bellar. Rom. vol. 2. p. 137. col. 2. Luxemb. 1727.]

*What the Church of Rome  
hath held.*

1. Before the time of the Nicene Council, little regard was had to the Church of Rome. So Pope Pius 2 Epist. p. 802; and the Church of Rome called others Apostolical and sister Churches.

\* De Pontif. l. 4. c. 14. § Tricesimus septimus. [Ibid. vol. 1. p. 477. col. 1.]

† Vid. Note first and second.

‡ De Not. l. 4. c. 6. § Quamvis autem. [Ibid. vol. 2. p. 105. col. 2]

2. The Pope of Rome is Christ's vicar, and hath the supreme power over the whole Church, and without subjection to him as such, is no salvation.—Concil. Trid. Sess. 6. Decret. de Reform. c. 1. [Ut supra, p. 768.] et Bulla Pii IV. [Ut supra.]

*Apocrypha.*

3. The Apocryphal books are canonical, and Tobit and Judith, &c are as much the Holy Scripture as Genesis, &c., and whosoever rejects these as not canonical, are accursed.—Concil. Trid. Sess. 4. [Ut supra, p. 746.]

2. For one bishop to set himself over the rest, and to have all the rest in subjection to him, is the pride of Lucifer, and the forerunner of Antichrist.—Pope Gregor. I. [Lib. 4.] Epist. 36. [Ibid. vol. 5. p. 1187, &c.]

3. St. Jerome (who was a member of the Latin Church) saith, that though Tobias, Judith, and Maccabees, &c. were read, yet they were not received as canonical Scriptures, Prolog. Prov. And Pope Gregory I., quoting the Maccabees, excuses himself for producing a testimony out of a book not canonical. "We do not amiss," &c. Moral. in Job. l. 19. c. 13. [vol. 1. p. 622. Par. 1705.]

*Scripture and Tradition.*

4. Scripture alone is not a rule of faith without tradition; and traditions are to be received with the like regard and veneration as the Scriptures.—Trid. Sess. 4. [Ut supra.]

4. Gregory I. saith, "All things which edify and instruct, are contained in the Scriptures;" and that "from thence the teachers may presently teach whatsoever is needful."—In Ezek. Hom. 1. l. c. 8. [Lib. 1. Hom. 9. ibid. p. 1264.] de Cur. Past. l. 2. c. 11. [p. 88. Lond. 1629.]

*Scripture in unknown Tongues.*

5. The Scriptures are not to be read in the vulgar tongue without license, because more prejudice and profit will redound from it.—Reg. Ind. Libr. prohib. R. 4. [Ibid. p. 953.]

5. Pope Gregory IX. A. D. 1227, [1237.] declared, "the not knowing the Scriptures by the testimony of truth itself, is the occasion of errors; and therefore it is expedient for all men to read or hear them."

—Epist. ad Germ. Archiep.  
Constant. apud M. Paris. Hen.  
3. [p. 313. col. 2. Par. 1644.]

*Merit.*

6. Good works do truly deserve eternal life, and who-soever holds the contrary, is accursed.—Trid. Sess. 6. c. 16. et can. 32. [Ibid. p. 763. 768.]

6. Gregory I. saith, “That the best of men will find no merit in their best actions:” and that “if he should attain to the highest virtue, he should obtain eternal life, not by merits, but by pardon.”—Moral. l. 9. c. 11. [c. 18. p. 301. Par. 1705.] And elsewhere he saith, “I pray to be saved, not trusting to my merits, but presuming to obtain that by thy mercy alone, which I hope not by my merit.”—In 1 Psal. pœnit. [Ibid. vol. 3. par. 2. p. 470.]

*Indulgences.*

7. By indulgences granted by the Popes and Prelates of the Church, persons are discharged from temporal punishment here, and in purgatory.—Trid. Sess. 25. [Ibid. p. 918.] Bull. Pii 4. [Ut supra.]

7. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, in Henry the Eighth’s time, saith, “The use of Indulgences seems to be late in the Church.” And upon the recital of this testimony, Polydore Virgil adds, “which being things of so great moment, you might expect them more certainly from the mouth of God.”—De Invent. l. 8. c. 1. [fol. 86. p. 2. Basil. 1521.] Cardinal Cajetan saith, “there is no authority of Scripture, or ancient Fathers, Greek or Latin, that brings them to our knowledge.”—Opusc. 15. c. 1.

*Purgatory.*

8. There is a purgatory after this life, where the souls

8. Bishop Fisher saith, “There is none, or very rare

of those that are not purged, nor have satisfied for their sins here, are there to be purged and to give satisfaction, unless their time be shortened by the prayers, alms, and masses of the living. —Trid. Sess. 25. et Sess. 22. can. 3. [Ibid. p. 894. 855.]

mention of purgatory in the ancient Fathers.”—Roff. contra Luther. Art. 18. [fol. 132. Colon. 1624.] And Pope Gregory I. saith, “That at the time of death, either the good or evil Spirit seizeth upon the soul, and and keeps it for ever with it, without any change.”—Moral. in Job. l. 8. c. 8. [Ut supra, vol. 1. p. 255.] Vid. Vindication of the Answer to some late Papers, p. 76.

*Service in an unknown Tongue.*

9. It is required that Divine Service be performed in the Latin tongue, and whosoever says it ought to be administered in a vulgar tongue, is accursed.

9. Bellarmine acknowledges, “that long after the Apostles, both in the eastern and western Churches, the people were wont to answer in Divine offices.”—De Verb. l. 2. cap. 16. § sed neque. Vid. Discourse concerning Celebration of Divine Service in an unknown Tongue, p. 46, 47, 48.

*Invocation of Saints.*

10. In the Church of Rome they pray to saints and angels as their intercessors. —Trid. Sess. 25. [Ibid. p. 895.] Catech. Rom. par. 4. c. 9.

10. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, saith, “Throughout the whole world the Church doth nothing by invocations of angels,—but directeth her prayers to God which hath made all, and calls upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

And it seems not to have been an article of faith in the times of Lombard and Scotus (as it is now); the one of which saith, “It is not incredible the saints do hear what we say.” And the latter, “It is probable God doth reveal our prayers.”—Lom.



Sent. lib. 4. Dist. 45. [p. 432.  
Colon. Agr. 1666.] Scot. in 5  
Dist. Q. 45.

### *Images.*

11. Images are not only to be placed in temples, but also to be worshipped; as if the persons represented thereby were present.—Trid. Sess. 25. [Ibid.] Catech. Rom. par. 4. c. 6. n. 4.

11. Pope Gregory I. after he hath allowed images in temples, for information of the ignorant, doth professedly forbid the worship of them.—Lib. 7. Epist. 109. [vol. 4. p. 294. Par. 1605.] ad Serenum, et Registr. Epist. l. 9. Ep. 9, [Ibid. p. 349.] &c.

### *Sacraments.*

12. There are seven sacraments truly and properly so; and whosoever saith there are more or fewer instituted by Christ, is accursed.—Trid. Sess. 7. can. 1. [Ibid. p. 776.]

12. Cassander, a member of the Church of Rome, saith, “we shall not likely find any before Pet. Lombard (who lived about 1130) that did define the number of the sacraments.”—Art. 13. § de Num. Sacr. [p. 951. Par. 1616.] And particularly Alex. Hales, the famous schoolman, saith, that confirmation was ordained to be a sacrament by the Meldensian Council. Par. 4. Q. 9. [24.] M. 1. [vol. 4. fol. 103. col. 4. Lugd. 1516.]

### *Transubstantiation.*

13. Bread and wine, after consecration, are turned into the substance of Christ's body and blood, without changing the species.—Conc. Trid. [Sess. 13. De Euchar. cap. 1. and can. 2. 3. ibid. p. 805. 808.]

13. Pope Gelasius saith, That in the sacrament the substance or nature of bread ceaseth not, or perisheth not.—Gelas. contr. Eutych.

Gregory I. saith, That our bodies as well as our souls are nourished by the eucharist.—Sacram. 16. Kal. Mar. [Ut supra, vol. 3. par. 1. p. 29.] et in 6 Psal. pœnit. [Ibid. par. 2. p. 544.]

*Communion in one kind.*

14. The people are forbidden to receive the sacrament in both kinds.—Trid. Sess. 21. c. 1. [Ibid. p. 846.]

14. Pope Gelasius declares, Either let them receive the whole sacrament, or let them be driven from the whole; for the dividing of one and the same sacrament, cannot be done without great sacrilege.—De Consecr. Dist. 2. comperimus. [Corp. Jur. Canon. vol. 1. p. 1918. Lugd. 1671.]

And Pope Gregory I. affirms it to be the constant practice for the people to receive it in both kinds. — Sacram. in Quadrag. Tr. 3. Vid. Vindication of the Answer to some Papers, p. 75.

*Solitary Masses.*

15. Solitary masses, wherein the priest communicates alone, are approved and commended; and whosoever saith they are unlawful, and to be abrogated, is accursed.—Trid. Sess. 22. can. 8. [Ibid. p. 856.]

15. Anacletus, bishop of Rome, did decree, that all present should communicate, or else should be turned out of the Church; for so the Apostles did order, and the holy Church of Rome observeth.—Par. 3. Dist. 1. Episcop. [Corp. Jur. Can. ut supra, p. 1907.] et 2 peracta. [Ibid. p. 1917.]

Gregory I. forbids the priest to celebrate the eucharist alone.—Greg. lib. Capitul. cap. 7. apud Cassand. Liturg. c. 33. [Ut supra, p. 83.]

*Auricular Confession.*

16. Without particular confession of sins to a priest, is neither forgiveness nor salvation to be obtained. — Trid. Sess. 14. c. 5. can. 6, 7. [Ibid. p. 818. 824.]

16. This was neither in the time of Pope Gelasius, nor Pope Gregory I.—Vid. Vindication of the Answer, p. 73.

*Extreme Unction.*

17. Extreme unction is a sacrament, and to be administered when persons are in imminent danger; and last of all to be applied.—Trid. Sess. 14. c. 13. [cap. 3. *ibid.* p. 823.]

17. In Gregory the First's time it was used in order to recovery; and the eucharist was to be given after it.—Sacram. p. 253. Vid. Vindicat. of the Answer, p. 77.

*Priests' Marriage.*

18. Those that are in orders may not marry, and those that are married may not be admitted to orders.—Conc. Later. 1. can. 21. [*Ibid.* vol. 12. p. 1337. Venet. 1728.] et Later. 2. can. 6. [*Ibid.* p. 1500.]

18. To marry was a privilege belonging to the clergy as well as others.—So Cas-sander consult. Art. 23. [Ut supra, p. 987.] et Polyd. Virg. Invent. l. 5. c. 4. [Ut supra, fol. 55.]

By this parallel thus far drawn betwixt the ancient and present doctrine of the Church of Rome, we may be able to judge of the immutability and duration of the Church; which can no more be consistent with it, than one part of a contradiction can be reconciled to another; or than infallibility can be consistent with the having actually erred. To find fallible Churches mistaken, and at some times to vary from themselves, is consistent with their nature, and for all which (if the errors are not fundamental) they are Churches still; but to find errors and contradictions in an infallible Church, is to confound the nature of things, to give the infallible Church no advantage over the fallible, and to expose the persons that betake themselves to that shelter, to all the inquietudes, uncertainties, and disappointments of ignorance and error. For what is the usual reason given for forsaking other Churches, but because they are fallible? What is the reason why they go over to the Church of Rome, but because she is (as they are made to believe) infallible? But if with her infallibility she has mistaken; if with her certainty she contradicts herself; if she was one thing in one age, and another in another, then there is the same reason to quit the Church of Rome as there was to embrace it; and such persons must either be contented with a Church that is fallible, or be of none.

THE  
FOURTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED,

VIZ.

AMPLITUDE, OR MULTITUDE AND VARIETY OF  
BELIEVERS.

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*Quarta Nota est AMPLITUDO, sive Multitudo et Varietas Credentium—*  
Bellar. Lib. iv. cap. vii. De Notis Ecclesiæ.

WE could very willingly appeal to our adversaries themselves, were they unconcerned, whether a plainer proof can be given of a baffled cause in a controversy relating to any point of revealed religion, than for the assertors of it to decline maintaining it by those books which alone can acquaint us with Divine revelations. But it is notorious that the Romanists are highly chargeable upon this account, in their endeavours to persuade the world that theirs is the only true Church. They need not be told that we are beholden to the Holy Scriptures for our having any notion of such a thing as a Church, and they and we are agreed that that only is the true Christian Church which professeth the true Christian faith; and therefore how is it possible they should not be aware that the best way to be satisfied, whether those who challenge to themselves the title of the true and catholic Church, have it really belonging to them, is to examine their faith by the Holy Scriptures? Which it is hard to imagine they can think to be so imperfect a rule of faith, as to believe it a justifiable thing to be so averse to this method, as we have ever found they are. This we of the Reformation have always stuck to, and we are desirous of nothing more, than that it may be tried by the faith we profess, whether we are sound members of the catholic Church, and the soundness of our faith may be tried by the Scriptures.

But instead of taking this course, those of the Roman communion have invented, and do insist on a company of notes and characters of the Church, which are either not to be met with or are far from being plainly delivered in Scripture. Had this



been our practice, I appeal to their own consciences whether they could have imputed it to a better cause, than our being conscious to ourselves of the disagreeableness of our faith with the doctrine of Scripture, and our not daring to have it brought to this touch-stone.

Of this sort of notes Cardinal Bellarmine hath given us no fewer than fifteen, among which he could afford no place to this note of ours; though it is as evident as the light, that this one alone would have signified much more to his purpose than all that long bead-roll put together.

The design of this discourse is to examine his fourth note, viz. "*Amplitudo, sive Multitudo et Varietas Credentium*. Amplitude, or Multitude and Variety of Believers." And how far he makes it to extend, his next words inform us, viz. "*Ecclesia enim verè catholica, non solum debet amplecti omnia tempora, sed etiam omnia Loca, omnes Nationes, omnium Hominum Genera*. The truly catholic Church ought not only to comprehend all ages, but also all places, all nations, and all sorts of men." And,

First, He endeavours to prove this to be a true note.

Secondly, To make it to belong to the Church of Rome, and to her alone.

Thirdly, To persuade us that those particularly who call themselves the Reformed Churches can lay no claim to it.

And it shall be my business,

First, To shew that this cannot be a note of the true Church. And,

Secondly, Supposing it to be so, that the Church of Rome will however gain nothing by it, as to her pretension, nor the Reformed Churches lose anything: nay, on the contrary, that it will quite overthrow her pretension of being the whole catholic Church, and do the Reformed Churches as great service, as her prejudice.

First, I will briefly shew, that this cannot be a note of the true Church. By a note is understood a distinguishing character; but this is such a character of the true Church, as no one could less distinguish it: and that, whether we consider the members thereof under either the notion of a great multitude, or a great multitude of believers.

Considering them under the notion of a great multitude, the Church, which is Christ's kingdom, is far from being distinguishable as such from the kingdom of Satan, which was always incomparably more numerous: or, from that part of it

which consisteth of idolatrous Pagans. What Romanist can boast of his Church, in reference to this note, as Demetrius the silversmith did of his Diana, when he said, "that all Asia and the world worshipped her?" Nor can the Church of Christ, by the number of its members, be distinguished from the worshippers of that impostor Mahomet; which the sons of the Roman Church must especially grant to be far exceeding the members of Christ's true Church in number, since they make themselves the only Catholics.

Again, considering them under the notion of a great multitude of believers, there was an age in which the orthodox Christians could not be distinguished from heretics, by the greatness of their number (whom the Romanists will not admit to be members of the Church in any sense), for in the reign of Arianism, "*ingemuit orbis et mirabatur, &c.*" The world lamented and wondered to find itself turned Arian," saith St. Hierom. And it became a proverb, "Athanasius against the whole world, and the whole world against Athanasius." And lastly, the Church of Christ is not to be thus distinguished from the kingdom of Antichrist. I wish our adversaries would impartially consider, whose note\* that of "having power given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations," is most likely to be: and who it is that is described by † "sitting, as upon seven hills, so upon many waters:" which waters are ‡ "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

These things considered, nothing is more apparent, than that the true Church is neither to be distinguished from other bodies of men, nor of professors of Christianity, by the largeness of its extent, or the numerousness of its members; and therefore that a true note thereof cannot result from these. And besides, a true note of the Church must be essential to it, must belong thereto as the true Church, and therefore is inseparable from it. But how could amplitude or multitude be ascribed to the true Church in the time of our Saviour, when he called it "a little flock," and said, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," &c.

But Bellarmine pretends to fetch this note of his out of the Bible, and not only to be beholden to Vincentius Lirinensis for it, whom he first cites in favour of it; though little to his pur-

\* Rev. xiii. 7.

† Chap. xvii. 1.

‡ Ver. 15.

pose, as will be seen anon. The texts he produceth are four, two in the Old Testament, and two in the New. Those in the Old Testament are, Psal. ii. 8, where God the Father promiseth his Son, "that he will give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession:" and Psal. lxxii. 8, where it is prophesied, that Christ "shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." Those in the New Testament are, Luke xxiv. 47, where our Lord declareth, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem:" and Acts i. 8, where he tells his Apostles, that "they shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon them, and they shall be witnesses unto him, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." And it cannot be doubted but that these texts do prove, that the members of Christ's Church shall be a very vast multitude, and that its amplitude should even extend over all the world. But nevertheless,

1. It doth not from hence follow that the conjunction of amplitude and multitude doth make a note, or distinguishing character of Christ's true Church. It is one thing to say it belongs thereto as an attribute, and another that it is appropriated to it as a note. That may be even essential to a thing, which yet is not a note of distinction, or peculiar property, whereby it may be known from all other things. The power of sensation is essential to a man, yet for all that, he is not distinguishable thereby from a beast. But it is evident from what hath been discoursed, that the true Church is not to be distinguished from the kingdom of Satan, nor of Antichrist, nor from erroneous sects, by amplitude and multitude. And that these together, or a part, are not so much as essential to the Church of Christ, since there was a time when, as hath been said, it was without them both.

2. This is so far from being a note of the Church, that it is no more than a variable state and condition thereof, since it hath had, from time to time, its ebbs and flows, and hath had sometimes larger, and at other times straiter and narrower bounds. This the Cardinal was aware of, and therefore, among other things he would have to be observed for the right understanding of this his note, he saith, "That although the Church ought not necessarily to be in all places at the same time, yet now it ought necessarily to be, or to have been, in

the greater part of the world: for it is acknowledged by all, even the heretics themselves (meaning the Protestants), that the Church is now in her old age, and therefore must be past growing." By the way, though all his heretics, no doubt, do believe that the Church hath daily grown older and older, yet I know not how many he hath found asserting, that she is now arrived at old age. But it will by no means be granted him, that the Church is yet grown so old, as to be past growing, or to have a period put to its time of increasing. And therefore I add,

3. That we have great assurance, that the Church hitherto hath not deserved to be compared with what it shall be before the end of the world, both in respect of its amplitude and the number of believers. For there are very many plain prophecies, from whence this may certainly be concluded, which all, that without prejudice consider them, must needs be satisfied, have not hitherto been accomplished; namely, those which have reference to the calling of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles, and the most plentiful effusion of the Spirit, and perfect rest from persecution, and universal peace, with the most wonderful outward prosperity of the Church. There are, I say, abundance of the plainest predictions and prophecies of this nature, which the Church hath not as yet experimented the performance of; and they are expressed in such words, as that it may reasonably be believed, that those great things which God hath heretofore done for his Church, either Jewish or Christian, are no better than types and emblems of what he intends to do in his appointed time. Among those predictions and promises, the reader may consult these following, which are but a few in comparison of the whole number, *viz.* in the Old Testament, Psalm xxii. 27 to 31; Isaiah ii. 1 to 6, chap. xi. throughout; Jer. xxxii. 37 to 43, chap. xxxiii. 7, to the end; Dan. vii. 13, 14: and in the New Testament, Matth. xxiv. 14; Rom. xi. 12, and ver. 25 to 33; 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16; Apoc. xx. 1 to 7. Though the fulfilling of these Scriptures hath been deferred for so many ages, yet "he is faithful that hath promised" so glorious an increase of his Church, with the other unspeakable blessings now mentioned, and will fulfil them when the time is come, which his infinite wisdom knows to be the fittest for that purpose.

And thus much may suffice to be said, in reference to the Cardinal's proving this note by Scripture.



As to those words, in the next place, of Vincentius Lirinensis, in his *Commonitorium*, which he produces for the confirming thereof, viz. “*Eos propriè esse catholicos, qui tenent id quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est.*” Those are properly Catholics, who hold that which hath been always, everywhere, and by all believed :” I answer—

1. That Vincentius doth not pretend to give us, in these words, a note of the catholic Church, but of such a Christian. This is evident at first sight : and so is this,

2. Whereas he makes it the character of a true Catholic, to hold what hath been believed *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*, it cannot be hence inferred, that he believed amplitude, or a multitude of believers, to be so much as an attribute of the catholic Church, and therefore much less a note.

3. If these words lay down a true note of a catholic Christian, then no body of Christians can be more evidently proved to be no true catholics, than those of the Roman communion may, in all those articles of faith which are peculiar to themselves. For, as to points of mere belief, how much more than the Apostles’ Creed can they shew us to have been received, “always, everywhere, and by all Christians?” But as for that large addition of Tridentine Articles, annexed to that Creed by Pope Pius IV. no unbiassed person can believe they have ever done anything like proving that any of them have been received always, and much less everywhere, and by all those whom themselves own for catholic Christians.

4. By this note of a catholic, no society of Christians can bid so fair for catholicism as the Reformed Churches, but especially the Church of England, whose avowed principle it is “to receive nothing as an article of faith, but what is contained in the Holy Scriptures, or may be proved thereby.”\* Nor doth she embrace any one doctrine as an article of faith, but what is clearly expressed in those books, of whose canonicalness there never was the least dispute in the Primitive Church.

Secondly. I proceed to shew, that if we should acknowledge this to be a true note of the catholic Church, instead of enabling the Church of Rome to make good her pretensions of so being, it will destroy them : and instead of doing disservice to the Reformed Churches, it will do them excellent service, and be a certain argument of their being true parts of the catholic Church. And,

\* Artic. 6.

1. I will shew that it will not at all advantage the Church of Rome, as to that her pretension, and therefore can do us no prejudice. The Cardinal proves,

(1.) "That his Church began to fructify throughout the world in the days of the Apostles," from these words of St. Paul, Col. i. 6, "The truth of the Gospel is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you," &c. But what is this to his Church? Is the Gospel's bringing forth fruit in all the world, the same thing with the Church of Rome's so doing?

(2.) He adds the authority of several Fathers, for this Church's being spread in their time all over the then known world, but gives us none of their sayings, except St. Prosper's. The first Father he cites is St. Irenæus, in the 3rd chapter of his book.\* But the Father here only saith, "that this faith (which he sums up immediately before, and is but the chief part of the Apostles' Creed) the Church disseminated throughout the world diligently preserves, as if it were confined but to one house." But how doth this concern the Church of Rome? which is not once mentioned with others here particularly named; except we could be made to believe that wheresoever the word Church is found, that Church is still to be understood. Next he cites Tertullian *adversus Judæos*,† and having searched that book, these, or none, are the words he means, *viz.* "Those words of David are to be understood of the Apostles, their sound is gone forth in all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world: for in whom have all nations believed, but in Christ, who is now come? The Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and those that inhabit Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, and Pamphylia, Egypt, Africa, and beyond Cyrene, the Romans and Jews now in Jerusalem, and other nations; as now of the Getuli and Moors, all Spain, divers countries of the Gauls, and those of the Britons, which the Romans could never conquer, are subject to Christ," &c. But I again ask, what is all this to the Church of Rome more than to any other particular Church belonging to any one of the many nations, of which that of the Romans is one, and two whole quarters of the world, here mentioned. His third Father is St. Cyprian, in his book *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*.‡ But here is nothing he could fancy to be for his purpose,

\* Edit. Paris. p. 53.

† Edit. Rig. p. 189. [Par. 1695.]

‡ Edit. Oxon. p. 108. [1682.]

except these words, "The Church is one, which by its fruitfulness is extended into a multitude; as there are many rays of the sun, and but one light, &c. So the Church of our Lord, which being filled with light, sends forth her beams through the whole world, is but one light, which is diffused every where." But though this be said of the catholic Church, is here the least intimation that the Church of Rome is this catholic Church? After St. Cyprian follow several of the later Fathers, their books being only directed to. But the narrow room I am confined to will not permit me to examine them; nor need we look any farther to be satisfied how this greatest man of the Roman Church condescended to the most shameful impertinence, in citing Scripture and Fathers for the doing her service. But we must not overlook St. Prosper's verses, in his book *De Ingratis*, viz. :

Sedes Roma Petri, quæ pastoralis honoris  
Facta caput mundo, quicquid non possidet armis,  
Religione tenet .....

i. e. "Rome, the seat of Peter, being made the head of pastoral honour in the world, whatsoever country she possesseth not by arms, she holds by her religion."

But, considering how early this Father lived, viz. about the beginning of the fifth century, he could mean no more than this, that the Church of Rome, the most honourable of all other (by means of that city's being the ancient seat of the Emperors), keeps still possession of those places by the religion they received from her, over which she hath lost her old dominion. And what is this but another plain instance of most idle quoting of ancient authors? Not to reflect upon fetch-arguments from poetical flourishes.

But, not to stand to consider how ample the Roman Church was in the times of those Fathers, nothing is more evident than that that part of Christendom she took up, was but a small spot of ground compared with the space those Churches filled; which, though they held communion with her, were distinct Churches from her, and owned no subjection to her. And it was about, or above, an hundred years after the youngest of those Fathers, that the Pope was invested by that execrable wretch Phocas (a blessed title in the mean time) with the primacy over all Churches. And Gregory the Great, who died in the beginning of the sixth century, not only sharply inveighed against John, patriarch of Constantinople, and his successor Cyriacus, for assuming to themselves the title of Universal

Bishops (though there was no appearance of their designing any thing more thereby than an addition of honour, not of power, to that patriarchate), but also called those who should affect such a haughty title\* the Forerunners of Antichrist. And as these bishops taking this title was a demonstration that they acknowledged not the least subjection to the bishops of Rome, so Pope Gregory calling those bishops who should do so, without exception, forerunners of Antichrist, is as plain a proof that the bishops of Rome, to his time, did not look on themselves as having a primacy over all Churches. And it is manifest, that in the time of the Council of Nice, the Church of Rome was not thought to include the catholic Church, or to be any more than one part thereof: this, I say, is manifest from the sixth canon of that Council, *viz.* "Let the ancient customs be preserved, for the Bishop of Alexandria to have jurisdiction over Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis; because the Bishop of Rome hath a like custom," &c. Which is as much as to say that the Bishop of Alexandria had then the same uncontrollable power in his large jurisdiction that the Bishop of Rome had in his. And therefore that Council knew nothing of this Bishop's having any power over the Alexandrian, and much less over the whole catholic Church. Nor is any thing more certain than that the mere superiority of honour which the Roman Church had, was founded on no Divine right, but only on that city's being the seat of the empire. For, as the second General Council, *viz.* that of Constantinople, decreed in its third canon, that the Bishop of Constantinople should have the privilege of honour next to the Bishop of Rome, upon the account of its being the imperial city, and therefore called New Rome: so in the twenty-eighth canon of the fourth General Council, *viz.* that of Chalcedon, it was ordained, that for the same reason, the Bishop of Constantinople should have equal privileges with the Bishop of Rome. So that it is a plain case, that whosoever shall undertake to prove from any sayings of the ancients, for the first 500 years at least, that the Church of Rome and the catholic Church were reputed to be the same, and consequently, that whatsoever they said of the amplitude of this is to be understood of that Church, must necessarily make as sad work of it as Bellarmine hath here done. And therefore it is apparent too, that no service can be done to the

\* Greg. Epist. 37 et 70. lib. 11. et Ep. 30. l. 4. [l. 6. Ep. 30. Labbe, Conc. vol. 5, p. 1276.]



Church of Rome by this note, as to her pretension of being the true catholic Church : from whence it will likewise follow that no prejudice can from thence accrue to the Reformed Churches. But this is not all : for,

2. This note, were it a true one, would be destructive to that her pretence, and do the Reformed Churches great service, *viz.* in demonstrating them to be true parts of the catholic Church. This also may be concluded from what hath been said, but it will be made more evident by the following considerations.

1. If the Church of Rome had as ample a spread over the world for some of the first ages, as Bellarmine contends for this would far more redound to the advantage of our Churches of the Reformation (were amplitude a distinguishing property of the Church), than to the advantage of the present Church of Rome, because that Church then was more ours than now it is the Romanists. For there can scarcely be a greater disagreement in doctrine or worship between any two Christian Churches, than there hath for a long time been between the same Church as she was then and is now. But the agreement is as great between the ancient Church of Rome and our Churches, and especially between her and the Church of England. This our adversaries could not but see, would they impartially compare the doctrine and worship of each together. And the only quarrel they have with us is, that we will not admit more in our creed than the Christians of the first ages did into theirs : and that we worship God only by the alone mediation of Jesus Christ, as they did : that our laity partake of the communion in both kinds as theirs did : and, in short, that we believe the Holy Scriptures to be a complete rule of faith, as it was every where believed to be by the primitive catholics ; and that we will not receive into our worship the Roman novelties, those things which were utterly unknown to both the Roman and all other Churches in those ages.

Now, whereas the Cardinal would have it observed, for the better explaining the meaning of this note : "That if one province alone should retain the true faith, it might properly be called the catholic Church so long as its faith is one and the same with that which at one time or other had prevailed in the whole world :'' we desire no greater advantage to our Church and all other in communion with her ; since these and those Churches, which in the primitive times were extended all over the then known parts of the world, are agreed in much more than all the fundamental points of faith.

2. It hath been estimated upon computation that the Churches subject to the Roman see exceed not much the Reformed Churches in amplitude or multitude of members :\* especially since Italy, Spain, and Portugal are detained in the Romish religion, not by choice or judgment, but by ignorance and the tyranny of the inquisition. But who can be ignorant that the Church of Rome bears not the least proportion upon those accounts, with these Churches, considered in conjunction with that part of Christendom which agreeth with them, as in all the main points of Christianity, so in refusing subjection to that Church ; and in most of those doctrines and practices, which we condemn in her as contrary to Holy Scripture, or as not founded thereon (and yet made necessary to salvation by her), and not taught by the primitive Church ? So that should all the Churches which deny that of Rome to have any authority over them deal with her as she hath dealt with them, and pronounce her to have nothing more left her than the mere name of a Church, this her note would be an unanswerable objection against her being a true Church, as well as the true Church, on supposition that (as she holds) of two parties of Christians rejecting communion with and unchurching each other, but one of them can be a true Church. That so large a part of Christendom, I say, agrees with the Reformed Churches in all the grand articles of faith, and in the chief of those wherein they are at variance with the Church of Rome, as makes the whole an incomparable greater body of believers than all those together who own that Church for their mother, is so notorious, that it is impossible our adversaries should dispute it.

The Cardinal indeed tells us, on this note, “That besides all Italy and Spain, and almost all France, which the Church of Rome possesseth ; and besides Germany, England, Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Greece, Syria, Ethiopia, Egypt, in which many Catholics are found ; even in the New World (*viz.* America) she hath Churches without the mixture of heretics.” And we can reply, That besides England, Scotland, and Ireland, in which Protestancy is the national religion ; and in the two former of which the number of Papists is very inconsiderable : and besides Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the United Provinces, in all which it is also the national religion ; and besides Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Transylvania, in which are abundance of Protestant Churches (as there were lately in the

\* See the Preface to Brerewood's Enquiries.

kingdom of France too, and it will never be forgot by what methods they have been extirpated); besides all those countries, I say, the Protestants have also their Churches in the New World, no less without the mixture of heretics: and these consist of other kind of believers than those the Romanists boast of in that quarter. For, whereas Surius and others have told prodigious stories of incredible numbers of them that have been baptized by particular priests; Acosta, though a Jesuit, acknowledgeth, that “many of them were driven to baptism as beasts to the water.”\* And Oviedo† saith of Cuba, “that there was scarcely any one, or but extremely few, that willingly became Christians.” And both he and Benzo,‡ who were long conversant in those parts, say of Cuba and New Spain, “that they had scarcely any thing belonging to Christianity, besides the bare name of Christians; that they only minded the name they received in baptism, and not long after forgot that too.” And the former of these makes this no matter of wonder, since he declares their converters to be no better Christians than these converts: and excellently expostulates with them about the horrible wickedness of their lives; telling them, that would they give the poor Indians good examples, this method would signify much more towards the making of them good Christians, than that course they took with them. And the old Monsieur Arnaud, in an assembly at Paris, scoffed at the Jesuits for the conversion of the Indians; calling it a brave warlike conversion, *conversionem bellam et bellicosam*; and telling them, that they had converted *Gladium oris in os gladii*.

And whereas the Cardinal, in the words following those last cited, makes this flourish: “That Rome hath Churches in all the four parts of the world; to the east in the Indies, to the west in America, to the north in Japan, to the south in Brazil, and the uttermost part in Africa:” if his meaning was more than this, that there is no country in all those parts, but what hath Romanists in it, it was (to say no worse) a mere flourish: if he meant no more than so, we may dare to affirm as much concerning Protestants. But it matters not much whether we can or no, since there are infinite numbers of Christians, who, though they bear not the name of Protestants, yet agree with them in not being Papists, and, as was said, in all the great points of the Christian religion; whether of faith or practice.

\* De Procur. Ind. Sal. 1. 6. c. 3.

† Ovied. Hist. Ind. Occid. 1. 17. c. 4.

‡ Benzo Hist. Nov. Orb. 1. 2. c. 19. [p. 256. Col. All. 1612.]

To pass by the Christians under the Patriarch of Mozall, of whom Postellus saith, "Though they are but few in comparison of what they have been, yet they are many more than us Latines."\* To say nothing neither of the Armenian Christians, falsely called Nestorians (whose Catholic, as they call their Patriarch, Otho Frisingensis, reports to have under his obedience above a thousand bishops,† from the report of his legates sent to Rome), both which vast bodies of Christians acknowledge no subjection to the see of Rome: I say, to pass by these, we need not instance in any besides the Greek Church, for the foresaid purpose: which hath had an uninterrupted succession of bishops from the Apostles, and is of greater antiquity than the Church of Rome, and which hath produced more Fathers than that Church. This Church is divided into many nations, as the Hiberians, the people of Colchis (now Mongrelia), the Arabians, Chaldeans, Ethiopians, Egyptians, Muscovites, Bulgarians, Sclavonians, Albanians, Caramanians, Walachians, Moldavians, Grecians, &c. And we may guess what a huge disproportion there is in largeness, between all the Greek Churches and those subject to the Church of Rome, by this, the countries in Europe and Asia, which the Muscovites alone inhabit, are computed to be near of as great an extent as all Europe besides.

The Greek Church hath four ancient Patriarchs, the Constantinopolitan, the Alexandrian, the Antiochian, and the Patriarch of Jerusalem. And since the Patriarchate of Constantinople hath been under the Turkish tyranny, there hath been a fifth Patriarch, *viz.* of Moscow. Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria, and since of Constantinople, Bellarmine's contemporary, saith of the Greek Church dispersed through the foresaid nations,‡ that "they are stedfast in the faith of Christ: that no innovation in matters of faith is found amongst them; and but only some difference in ceremonies." He acknowledgeth that some of those nations are not free from superstition; but adds, "that without detriment of the faith, it is connived at, because it cannot be remedied, in regard of many difficulties: but in those things which belong to the essence of faith, *perseverantes sunt et permanentes*, they are fixed and unalterable." He also writes, "that whereas the oriental

\* Cosmog. p. 69.

† See Brerewood's Enquiries, p. 211. last edit.

‡ Ep. 2. ad Vytenbogard. inter Ep. præst. Vir. p. 399. in 8vo.



Churches seem to be reproached for their ignorance ; philosophy and other sorts of learning being gone from thence into other parts, since they have been oppressed with many miseries, by reason of the tyranny of the Turk, yet they reap no small advantage hereby ; because by this means they are unacquainted with those pestiferous questions, which at this time affect men's ears ; and with the new monstrous portentous doctrines."\* And it is plain what doctrines he chiefly meant. He adds, "that they are content with *incompta fides*, a plain undrest faith, taught them by the Apostles and their ancestors, and herein they persevere even unto blood : that they keep Ὁρθοδοξίαν *integram*, the faith entirely : that they see themselves bereft of all their substance, their children snatched from their embraces, and are continually brought into the greatest tribulations, yet it is not grievous to them to suffer these things for the faith of Christ,"† &c.

So that the motto which Minutius Felix made for the Primitive Christians, "*Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus* ; great things are not so much talked as lived by us : " this great prelate (whose fidelity in this account is unquestionable, he being a person of as famed piety as learning) doth assure us is deserved by these Greek Christians. But for all this, they must all be doomed to hell torments, as effectually as the Church of Rome's sentence can do it, because they will not truckle under her, and be made subject to a double bondage.

And thus have I sufficiently shewed, that it would be for the interest of the Reformed Churches that Cardinal Bellarmine's fourth note of the Church were as true as we have proved it false : and that it would then overthrow instead of establishing the Church of Rome's marvellous pretence of being the true or catholic Church.

\* Ep. 1. ad eundem. *ibid.* p. 369.

† See the Rev. Dean Stillingfleet's Defence of the Greek Church from the Romanists' charge of Heresy, in his learned Vindication of Archbishop Laud.

THE  
FIFTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED,  
VIZ.

THE SUCCESSION OF BISHOPS.

*Quinta Nota est Successio Episcoporum in Romana Ecclesia ab Apostolis deducta usque ad nos.*—Bellar. Lib. iv. cap. viii. de Notis Ecclesiæ.

THE disputers of the Roman communion boasting in nothing so much as in the venerable name of the catholic Church, using all means to appropriate it to themselves exclusively to any others: and it being the most popular argument they flee too, and with which they commonly begin and end all debates: we are concerned faithfully and plainly to examine their title or claim to so honourable a denomination, and the many vast privileges founded thereupon.

Among the notes of the Church in Bellarmine (their chief champion), the fifth in order, and it may be not the least plausible in all his number, is this of the succession of bishops, the subject of this short essay; in which three inquiries may be made.

- I. *How far this note may be necessary to any Church.*
- II. *How far this may be granted to the Roman Church.*
- III. *How insufficient a proof it affords to them of any great advantage by it.*

Inquiry 1. Concess. 1. In answer to the former, it may, I presume, be generally yielded, that, to the complete constitution of the Church, it will be always needful that there be in it true and lawful pastors, not only for the rightful administration of God's word and sacraments, but also for the due and orderly government thereof, and the dispensation of wholesome discipline to the flock committed to their charge; requiring all tender care, vigilant inspection, and indulgent provision for them; and all cheerful and humble submission, and ready subjection from these. Requisites to any society, confirmed by many precepts and examples in Scripture.

Concess. 2. We yield this pastoral power originally to be

from Christ, the head of his Church, the chief bishop and pastor of his flock, and by him immediately conveyed to the Apostles, and from them derived by imposition of hands, or ordination to their successors in the several Churches which they planted, and so to be continued by a regular succession to the end of the world, as may be proved by the several directions in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and examples in the Acts of the Apostles, and the following practice of the Church in all ages and places, of which we have any records extant: "no man taketh this honour to himself."\*

Concess. 3. We grant farther, that according to the best evidence of Scripture-rule or example, and the constant practice of Christ's Church, the power of ordination is entrusted with the bishops, the chief governors thereof, and ordinary successors of the Apostles unto the end of the world. And we as readily embrace the canonical provisions of the Constitutions, under the name of the Apostles, by St. Clement, or the decree of the ever-renowned first Council of Nice, "that every bishop be ordained by three bishops, or two at the least," &c.

All most agreeable to the doctrine and practice of the Church of England. Such is our government and succession, not at all interrupted in the Reformation, whatever difficulties it struggled with elsewhere. A signal happiness, for which we have reason ever to bless God, and not peevishly to endeavour, by wilful and schismatical separations, to deprive ourselves of that privilege, which may be the chief eye-sore to our adversaries, and thereby to furnish them with new and better arguments than ever yet they found against us. If their succession be good, so is ours (for sure it is not tied to one place); whether we derive it through them by Augustine the monk, though ordained in France, or from or by the British bishops, who had been here several ages before his coming, and by as regular a succession from Apostolical times, without any dependence, as they profess, or as far as we can find, on the see or bishop of Rome.

Observ. 1. However, it may be noted, that though this succession of bishops be necessary to the complete constitution of the Church; yet it may well be doubted whether it is indispensable to the very being of it, so as to unchurch every place that wants these. For baptism alone gives us admission into the Church, and a title to the heavenly inheritance upon the

\* Heb. v. 4.

performance of our part of the covenant. And although this obliges all Christians to endeavour to provide themselves with lawful pastors for their constant supply in all the means of grace, and so to seek them abroad, as far as they can, where they have them not at home: yet, in a supposed case, where these may not be had, or but upon condition out of their power to yield; or, in the mean time, they who suppose baptism to be valid, though in case of necessity administered by any Christian, nay, according to their catechism, by Jew, infidel, or heretic, if he but intend to do what the Church designs hereby, must not presently unchurch any place, or exclude all persons that want this full provision of all needful helps and advantages, though some of most immediate divine institution. What allowances God may make for great necessities, or almost invincible difficulties and prejudices, where men are not wilfully and obstinately wanting to themselves, we cannot or must not determine.

Observ. 2. It is not necessary that every Church which may firmly presume upon this lawful and orderly succession, even from the Apostles, should be able to produce the records of its conveyance through every age, and in every single person by whom it hath passed. Few Churches of long continuance have been so happy as to preserve authentic registers of all their transactions from their first plantation; which must not weaken their authority, or make doubtful the effect of their ministrations, where no positive evidence is brought to the contrary. The ancients content themselves in delivering down to us the succession of bishops in the greater sees and mother-cities, not of Rome only, but of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and others (though Bellarmine insinuates the contrary here),\* as is most apparent in Eusebius, &c. The eminence of their place and power, the frequent resort of other neighbouring Churches to them, from whom they were generally derived, or as dependent on their cities in civil administrations, which the ecclesiastical usually followed; these and such like reasons made them more the notice of all about them, and their successions more carefully recorded in Church writers: which possibly they might have then done in many of the lesser Churches had they judged it necessary, when within a very few centuries, and not through very many persons, the oldest might have been traced to its first original. But much

\* Answ. to the 3rd Object. [vol. 2. p. 110. col. 1. Prag. 1721.]



different is the case now, after so many changes of nations and cities, by the violences of war, and other commotions, for more than 1600 years since the first dispersion of the Church.

Observ. 3. Some irregularities and uncanonical proceedings in times of great schisms, or public disturbances, have generally had a very favourable confirmation to make up those breaches, not otherwise easily to be healed, and so been interpreted for no interruption of this authentical succession. Such as the allowance of several schismatical ordinations, if not by downright heretics, and other violent and tumultuary proceedings, which would not beforehand have passed without a very severe censure, but afterwards have been rather judged charitably to be connived at, than with extreme force and danger to be wholly altered. Without a very candid interpretation of many public occurrences, through a long series of time, all government would be exposed to endless confusions. The greatest reason, interest and duty, oblige all private persons not to busy themselves in prying into, much more not invidiously to expose every punctilio or fancied defect in the least formality of the constitution of those orderly set over them, where no direct encouragement is given to the most presumptuous and sacrilegious invasions. Neither can we think our most gracious and merciful Redeemer will severely exact from his humble and obedient followers the failure of their guides, which it was not in their power to amend, or deny them the salutary benefits of his own institutions, for want of the most exact regularity of those who dispense them. In which case I doubt the Romanists would have as little security as any beside.

Inquiry 2. And that brings me to the second inquiry. How far this Succession of Bishops may be granted to the Roman Church? The usual succession of persons in the government of the Church of Rome from the very Apostles, we are not concerned to call into question, though little we have left upon record of many among them but only their bare names, and that signifies not much. And for the small knowledge we have of any of the rest at the beginning, or of what passed among them for some hundred years after St. Clement, we are beholden to the writers of other Churches; this so famous Church having left none for some considerable time, that I know of, except the Decretal Epistles, as termed, be called in; which the most ingenious among them will scarce own for any other than spurious, or doubtful at best; and yet

what great stress has been laid on them? And excepting also the very little remains in other authors. If they, or others for them, have been more accurate in preserving the memorials of the lineal descent of their bishops than most Churches (though learned men are not yet agreed neither among themselves nor us about the exact order of the very first of them); yet I suppose the other patriarchal seats of Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch, to mention no more, will think themselves as secure of their own pedigree, and the derivation liable to as few exceptions.

For if the charge of heresy break the connexion of this chain, which Bellarmine here objects against the Greeks, it will be as hard for him to clear the like more notorious objections against Liberius, Vigilius, and Honorius, to mention nothing of later Popes, whose very gross errors, if not blasphemies, if they must not come under that name, yet certainly some of them deserve every whit as bad, being as destructive to all religion; wherein may be consulted their own writers of their lives: I take no delight to search after such matters. Not to insist on the foul depravations of faith and good practice, we charge upon them for so long time, I hope not without great necessity and reason.

If schismatical intrusions presently dissolve this orderly succession, which the same author\* charges so confidently here upon others, he himself will own Felix II. and Vigilius to have come in so: and that to save any of them, if possible, from the former imputation, and yet nevertheless to fill up the number of lawful Popes, yea of martyrs or confessors too.

To which may be added the several schisms and tumults from opposite elections, and sometimes admissions. As those at the choice of Damasus,† Symmachus I., Boniface II., Sergius I., John XIII., Benedict V., Leo VIII., Gregory V., Benedict IX., Silvester III., Benedict X., Nicholas II., Calistus II., Honorius II., Innocent II., Urban VI.; and that great schism when three Anti-popes, Gregory XII., Benedict XIII., and John XXIII. or (as some will have it) the XXIVth (after the death of Alexander V.) claimed the chair of St. Peter at the same time. Each had his followers; to end which contention, the Council of Constance thought fit to depose them all, and set up Martin V. I mention nothing of that story, which, be sure, was no tale of the Protestants; but some have

\* De Rom. Pont. l. 4. c. 9, 10. [vol. 1. p. 462, &c. Prag. 1721.]

† See Platina of them and others.

observed it was first called in question by them. Neither do I insist on the Popes seventy years residence at Avignon in France.

These and such like accidents, whatever difficulties, to know who had the best title, they may afford not easy to be cleared from him that had a mind to seek objections; yet seeming for the main no more than what the intricacies and perplexities of the current of human affairs have been ever exposed to, I should not have taken notice of, had not the foundation of all truth or certainty, and the perpetual duration of the Church of Christ been thought only with safety to be placed upon the supposed rock of the stability of this chair, and indefectibility of this Church, and, with many, the infallibility of him that presides therein. And were they not so bold, to say no more, as to prescribe very strange and extraordinary rules or measures to the supreme Providence in the conduct thereof, whatever becomes of any other, or else all must be lost.

We acknowledge the wonderful providence of God in the preservation of his faith and Church, as much from the corruptions of its own members, as from the violence and policies of its professed enemies: but we dare not be so presumptuous as to challenge our Saviour with being wanting to his promise, or complain we want any needful security to our faith, or that there is any defect in the authority or ministration of our spiritual guides, if any particular person or set number of them may possibly be liable to mistake in matters of faith, or determine otherwise than they ought, or prove false to their trust. It is a very unsafe, and often fallacious way of arguing, however popular, and that needs less trouble in examination, from persons to things; whereas these will continue the same, but they are changeable.

1. But then it may be observed of the Roman succession, that the case seems so extremely changed since the first times. So great an alteration there is in the persons, and in the office to which the succession is now come, that it can hardly be looked on as the continuation of the same. The episcopal power is all that we can find for some hundred of years laid claim to, and our note is only concerned in it, though in some few single acts it began by degrees to be stretched, so as to put other bishops upon their guard and protestations, as in the case of appeals by the Africans. Yet were all bishops owned to have an equal share in that; all to be of like power and authority, all alike successors of the Apostles, whether at

Rome, or in the meanest city, as in the known testimonies of St. Cyprian and St. Jerome, &c., yet the Papal power now challenged and exercised, is so vastly and widely different from episcopacy, that scarce any propriety of speech can bring them under the same name.

But to come to matter of fact. Notwithstanding the high eulogiums given by the ancients, on particular occasions, to the Roman Church or bishops, and the very bold efforts, and very lofty aspirings of some of these, yet he must have other eyes, or other spectacles than we can procure, who can espy any thing like the supremacy and authority claimed by the present Papacy in the principles, or practice of the Church for more than five hundred years, which (as hath been observed) could not but have been as discernible in all the histories of those times, as the reference to the power of our kings, and manner of our government must be in our own history.

2. Farther indeed there seems no great reason for them to be much concerned at the succession of bishops, that are not very favourable to the very order. We know what great opposition in their Council of Trent the Divine right of episcopacy met with from the chief favourites of that see,\* when the determination was so strongly pressed by others. And the author of these notes is pleased to determine the government of the Church not to be chiefly in the bishops, but properly and entirely monarchical, in the Pope only, and that he derives his power immediately from Christ. But the bishops have theirs from him as to jurisdiction, which is government.

3. Moreover they have the less reason to except against any Churches for the want of this Apostolical order, when their very Catechism, that multiplies orders with much less distinction of office, makes this no distinct order, but only a different degree of the same priesthood, the supreme order in their Church ascending only gradually from that of a common presbyter to that of bishops, archbishops, patriarchs, and the Pope himself. Some of the intermediate we know admit no distinct ordination: nay, the pretended plenary power of the Pope, hath sometimes by particular delegations empowered not only mitred abbots, but mere presbyters, to supply the place of two of the bishops, if but one be present even in ordination itself, and that of a bishop, as Bellarmine in this very note yields. Many other instances might be given of their endeavours to advance the

\* De Pont. Rom. l. 1. c. 8, 9. [vol. 1. p. 287, &c.] l. 4. c. 24. [Ibid. p. 495, &c.]



first, as it were on purpose to fence off the danger of a rival. To what use else should serve so many privileges and exemptions, long complained of? Their chief rise hath been upon the depression of bishops, and robbing them of their ordinary power. So quite opposite is the true case from the jealousies of some, about this primitive order.

4. Also they will have little cause to glory much in this pretended uninterrupted succession, when they consider how many nullities, according to their own principles, may dissolve and separate the closest connexion thereof. For, besides confused, tumultuary, and simoniacal promotions, from which some of their own writers will scarce free some of them, that one principle of "the intention" of the priest, being necessary to the effect of any sacrament, had need make them fearful of relying too much upon it. For in case this were once wanting in some of the principal sources, through so long a tract of time, variety of circumstances, and different tempers of persons, which many will think no hard matter to suppose however, it can never be certainly proved otherwise; by this rule they cannot be secure of any order, yea scarce of any true Christian among them.

Inquiry 3 So I proceed to the third inquiry: How insufficient a proof this will afford them of any great advantage. Indeed Bellarmine himself seems so just, as in part to yield this in his answer to the fourth objection about this note. He says, an argument may be brought that there the Church is not, where there is not this succession: but it cannot thence necessarily be gathered, that there the Church is, wheresoever this succession is; so that it seems no positive proof with him. Wherefore he thinks fit to exclude the Eastern Churches, or break their succession upon pretences of heresy.

1. For first, This succession is no sufficient evidence of the truth of the doctrine of any Church. Indeed were tradition so infallible a conveyance of truth, as some men that talk of nothing below demonstration, would vouch: were it impossible for any new opinion to creep into the Church: were it necessary that men must believe to-day as they did yesterday; and so in short, as it were, at one leap, up to the very Apostles; and that the passage of sixteen hundred years were able to make as little alteration in the memorials or evidences of what doctrines or rules of practice were first delivered by word of mouth, as the last night's sleep does of what passed the day before: then every Church of Apostolical foundation (and such were

all then planted) had been, and would still continue as infallible as the Church of Rome thinks herself, and we should not have had any dispute about their tenets, nor any such exceptions against their succession. What security theirs hath from the defections others are charged with, or have been found liable to ; what evidence may be produced that any Church, or company of men in the Church, may not add, in process of time, some doctrines and usages very prejudicial to the common faith once delivered to the saints : and that the resolution of our faith is only with safety to be made into the perpetuity and infallibility of the Roman Church alone by itself, or its dependants, we are yet to seek : and much wonder, that the ancients, in all their disputes with heretics and schismatics, should take so great a compass to confute their adversaries from Scripture, reason, and other authorities, beside what the see of Rome afforded ; and not, with our modern controvertists, make short work, in appealing to this last only effectual way of decision, had it then been received, and known 'for so fundamental a principle of Christianity as is now pretended.

2. As this uninterrupted succession of bishops, where yielded, is no sufficient proof of the truth of the doctrine of any Church ; so neither is it "a warrantable ground of the claim of superiority over another Church, which hath not so clear evidences thereof." And if these two fail those we have to deal with, they will gain very little by this note. For as the succession may, yea ought to be supposed good, when sufficient proof appears not to the contrary: so where there really appears want of this succession, and need to fly to other Churches for the relief thereof, yet this charitable assistance which all ought most freely and willingly to offer, or lend to each other, does not presently give one the power over the other for ever after. The Apostles themselves seem not to derive their power over the Churches by them planted, so much from the success of their labours, as from their immediate Divine commission, intimated in the beginning of their Epistles, though the one was a great endearment and enforcement to the other, and so it ought to be. We may suppose sometimes greater Churches converted by the ministry of the less, who were so happy as to receive the faith before them. Younger Churches have many times leaped over the heads of much elder, and the inferior having gained some considerable advancement in a civil account, have soon arrived at a proportionable promotion in the ecclesiastical, as particularly the

Church of Constantinople. And somewhat like may be observed in the changes of other cities: superior bishops are ordained by those over whom they after have some authority. For if not only priority of order, but also superiority of jurisdiction be unalterably entailed upon the eldest; I doubt the Church of Jerusalem, which was certainly the Mother-church, must be also the "mistress of all." And if that line be extinct, I believe there are many branches it must descend to, before it comes to the Roman. Some have disputed whether Britain itself had not a Church as soon. And that they should ground a claim from what they will not yield to others sufficient for the same purpose, seems very unequal.

But surely the designs and effects of this spiritual warfare, are not like those usually of the carnal, merely to enlarge the dominions of their leaders and advance the power of their governors. The Church's conquests consist in the multitude of souls gained to Christ, in the new plantations, or farther growth and improvements of all Christian graces and virtues in men's minds; in fastening some good and benefit on them, and not in gaining new outward dependances to ourselves, any farther than the needful preservation of peace and order in every distinct dominion: what is more, smells too strongly of worldly policy, temporal gain, or secular ambition, to have any true place here. When men are more industrious to promote and encourage everywhere sincere piety and probity, and less concerned in the claims of unlimited sovereignty and power, then may we think true religion, and not other interest, to be the first mover with them.

But to consider a little the Cardinal's testimonies here. The second out of St. Augustine, *Psalmus contra partem Donati*, being the fullest and alone pertinent to their purpose, I single out. "*Numerate, inquit, sacerdotes, vel ab ipsa sede Petri, et in ordine illo Patrum, quis cui successerit, videte; ipsa est Petra quam non vincunt superbæ inferorum portæ.*" As to the latter part of it where the stress lies, we have this argument, that it must be interpreted only as an occasional allusion, that in many places where he purposely expounds that passage of the Gospel, he makes Christ himself, confessed by St. Peter, to be the rock on which he built his Church: as *Retract. l. 1. 21. tom. 1. p. 30.* and in *cap. 21. Sti. Johan. tom. 9. p. 572. Super hanc Petram quam confessus es, &c.* And indeed asserts no more but matter of fact in a single case, that the seat of St. Peter (to which the Donatists, when

condemned by the African bishops, upon their appeal to the Emperor, were referred) was as a rock, which the proud gates of hell (so he resembles their presumptions) do not prevail against: that is, the cause was given against them by the Roman bishop, and others joined with him. Where, though some allusion may be made to the place in the Gospel, yet it is not fair to strain an argument thence against the plain and expressly designed exposition of it; especially among such short strictures of which that tract is made up. And for the other testimonies in Irenæus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius, we acknowledge their arguments good against upstart teachers of new doctrine. But they expressly join "succession of doctrine with that of persons," otherwise it had been of no validity, unless by referring their adversaries (who were not much moved by authority) to the evidences of the conveyance of the opposite opinions to them from the first originals. The other two places in St. Augustine, and that of Optatus against the Donatists, imply no more to those presumptuous enclosers of the whole Church within their own narrow bounds, and beginners of it from themselves, than a challenge for them to shew anything of the Apostolical original thereof, or after-conveyance like other Churches, and particularly the Roman, wherein St. Augustine, Epist. 165, after a catalogue of the bishops thereof, thus closes, *In hoc ordine successionis nullus Donatista Episcopus invenitur*; and in all his disputes with them, lays the charge of the guilt of their schism upon the separation from all the Churches dispersed over the world, according to prophetic and evangelical declarations. No person or place to prejudicate to all others, it follows in the forementioned, *ut certa sit spes fidelibus, quæ non in homine sed in Domino collocata*. All which and more, to any that consult the references throughout, rather confirm our claim. We have as good evidences and conveyances as our adversaries can challenge, we pretend not to any new doctrine; but for the main ours are what themselves dare not but own. What we reject among them, are not only as additions, which none must make to the first principles of religion, but over and above very dangerous and destructive to the common faith of both. For the proof of such doctrine, or continuance of it, we need no new miracles, or new authority from heaven, but an orderly conveyance of the old, and that we still, thanks be to God, retain.

And truly Bellarmine's inference from the mentioned cita-



tions, will carry in it little or no force, but seems rather to incline the contrary way. "If they," says he, "made so much of the continued succession of twelve, twenty, or forty bishops, how much may we of more than two hundred?" Certainly the argument from succession here is much stronger, the nearer it comes to the original, from which all the authority and virtue in the following are derived; the water may be supposed clearer and more natural the nearer to the fountain head. There is at least some danger from every remove or change made. I am apt to think they themselves will hardly suppose they have a better argument from succession, than those had twelve hundred or more years since. For if it be good now, be sure it was so then. But it will not follow alternately, if then good it must hold so still. The case may be presumed much different in the succession of ecclesiastical dignities and secular; in this latter it may be supposed the title gathers still more strength by the length of its continuance, is more confirmed by long possession, and many superinduced obligations, but was, it may be, weakest in its beginnings, as in most particular governments now, when of a mere human original, so far as we may with due modesty and reverence look that way. But spiritual power in whomsoever, where legitimate, can only descend at first from an immediate Divine commission, and that we may suppose gains nothing by passing through human hands and infirmities, being most strong and powerful in its first rise. Indeed, did the Cardinal argue only for a temporal and ecclesiastical monarchy, and would he be content to begin it after Pope Gregory the First, and then to rise by degrees for a while: succession appears to me the best argument they have.

However, it is much easier to shew fair evidences of the unaltered conveyance of the same truth from one to another, when it hath gone through so few hands, and that the eldest bears its date but a very few centuries off (as Irenæus expressly in the place cited, l. 3. c. 3. and Epiphanius Hær. 27. Carpocrat. p. 104), than it can be when they are multiplied to the present number, and the footsteps of its continued passage are almost worn out through so long a tract of time, and numerous cross accidents.

Yet, to give them their due, the eminent zeal of several of their first bishops, that sealed to the custody of the true faith with their blood, being still as it were in view of their persecutors; their general constancy thereto, in which so many

wavered or fell in the time of the Arian persecution; the relief and refuge they then, and after, afforded to such as suffered in that or like causes: as well as the prerogative of their place in the imperial city, and the current tradition of their Church's first foundation, by the joint labours of those chief Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul; these gave them great credit in those ages; and while they used their power so well, every one was ready to enlarge it, and to flee thither for sanctuary when oppressed. In which case men are very apt to speak bountifully of their patrons. And no marvel if they single out sometimes so venerable a name and authority to oppose, and even to bear down the impertinent obstinacy and peevish presumption of every new upstart schismatic or heretic, that would dictate to us strange and unheard of principles, and unchurch all before or beside themselves, and must begin the date of it from themselves: for thus most of the citations mentioned are plainly levelled. And in such a case, we should judge the arguing sufficient still to silence such an insolent boaster, though we should begin the succession no sooner than the time they ended, and when we own religion began to decline in some parts, but sure not to expire. Nay, I could add, though we should rise no higher than the Reformation itself, as late as it was; and how contemptuously soever they are pleased sometimes to speak of the happy instruments thereof.

An extraordinary Providence also seems to have attended the preservation of them so long under the Arian Gothic kings, and a strange temporal felicity in being still gainers in the end by all the invasions and calamities incident to so many changes of government, by which most beside were losers. But I should think, if they consulted Scripture, reason, and experience of former examples, with present sensible observation, more than any fancied schemes and models of their own, what they would judge best to have done; they might think it not unlikely, at least be more willing to stand to the trial whether it be not so, that upon so long a continued and still growing accession of wealth and greatness to their Church, many and great corruptions might creep in: which we charge them with, and have only removed by the Reformation, without turning them or our ancestors out of the Church before, or ourselves since.

If the favours they have so long enjoyed, make them more industrious and cautious in the examination of themselves, to

reform whatever they can find amiss, and to be more charitably helpful and beneficial to others, they will be far better employed, than in grasping at still more power, and justifying all that they teach, or do, by the (oft to us) unaccountable successes of Providence; which the worst causes have fled to for shelter, and the worst men, when they had nothing else to plead.

God Almighty give us all grace entirely to devote all our studies and labours to the service of our Great Master, and the best and most certain benefit of his Church, in the furtherance of sound faith and universal holiness of life, in all true piety, probity, charity, and peaceable communion, among all that in every place call on the name of the Lord, theirs and ours: which will afford us a far more comfortable reckoning at the great day of account, than to busy ourselves in thrusting all beside out of the Church here, and pronouncing condemnation against them for hereafter; or, on the other side, in carrying on still unaccountable prejudices, and endless separations. The God of wisdom, truth, and peace, will (I hope) at length, give us a right understanding in all things.

THE  
SIXTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED :

VIZ.

AGREEMENT IN DOCTRINE WITH THE PRIMITIVE  
CHURCH.

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*Sexta Nota est Conspiratio in Doctrina cum Ecclesia Antiqua.*—Bellar.  
Lib. iv. cap. ix. De Notis Ecclesiæ.

WE are very willing to own this for a true mark of the Church, "its agreeing with the doctrine of the primitive Church;" and we are so far from confuting Bellarmine for his giving of it, that we do not doubt but he has hereby confuted himself and the whole cause of the Roman Church: for if we may be allowed to go back to the primitive Church, and to examine the doctrine and belief of that, in order to find out what is the true Church at present, then the pretended infallibility of the present Church, and the necessity of receiving and believing all that she imposes, must be set by, till it appears that she requires the same doctrine, and no other, than what was taught and believed by the primitive Church: for, according to this note, it does not appear which is the true Church, till it first appears that it agrees with the doctrine of the primitive; and till it appears that it is a true Church, it cannot sure appear to be an infallible one: for it cannot be pretended that infallibility belongs to any but the true Church: and therefore it must be first known that the present Church agrees with the primitive, before it can be known that she is an infallible guide and teacher: so that we manifestly gain this first by this note of the Church, that all those big and blustering claims to infallibility, must be postponed and laid aside, till that of agreeing with the doctrine of the primitive Church be made out; and when that is done, we shall not have quite so much reason to question her infallibility. We desire nothing more than to have the matter brought to this issue, whether



the doctrines of the Reformed or the Romish Church do agree best with the primitive? Since for reasons well known to themselves, and very much suspected by others, they are so willing to go off from Scripture, and to decline the judgment of that as incompetent and insufficient in most of the controversies between us, we are very ready to leave them to be decided by any other indifferent arbitrator; for we think it is a little odd and unreasonable they should make themselves the only judges of what is in difference between us; and therefore we are very ready to stand to the award and umpirage of the primitive Church, and we are not in the least afraid to venture our whole cause to the sentence and decision of that; for though the Scripture be our only rule of faith and doctrine necessary to be believed by us, because we know of no other revelation but that, and nothing but revelation makes any doctrine necessary to be believed, yet we are very willing to take the sense and meaning of Scripture both from itself, and from the primitive Church too: so, according to Vincentius Lirinensis, “to have the line of scriptural interpretation be directed by the rule of ecclesiastical and catholic judgment;”<sup>\*</sup> that is, to have the primitive Church direct us in interpreting Scripture where it stands in need of it, or there is any controversy about its meaning: “Let the Scripture therefore, as sensed by the primitive Church, and not by the private judgment of any particular man, be allowed and agreed by us to be the rule of our faith; and let that be accounted the true Church, whose faith and doctrine is most conformable and agreeable with the primitive.”

We desire nothing more, than to find out the true Church by the true faith, and we think this is the true way to find it out: for Christian faith is prior and antecedent to the Christian Church; and that must be first known and supposed, before we can know any such thing as a Church; for it is the faith makes the Church, and not the Church the faith; and therefore the true Church is to be known by the true doctrine, and not the true doctrine by the Church, as is some folks way.

If a Church then has never so many other glorious marks, yet if it has not the true faith, according to the rule before

<sup>\*</sup> Ut Propheticae et Apostolicae interpretationis linea secundum Ecclesiastici et Catholici sensus normam dirigatur.—Vincent. Lirinens. contra Hæres. c. 2. [Biblioth. Vet. Patr. vol. 10. p. 103. col. 2. Venet. 1774.]

laid down, it cannot be the true Church ; and if it have never so true a succession of pastors, deriving their power in an uninterrupted line from the Apostles, yet if it have not a true succession of doctrine too from them, it is not a true Church. So far indeed as it holds and professes the common Christian faith, so far, for that very reason, it is a true Church ; and so far we allow the Roman to be a true Church ; and so far they cannot deny us to be one neither, as the same faith and fundamentals of Christianity are received and believed by both of us, for this faith being the same to both of us, makes us both so far to be true Churches upon the same grounds ; but so far as we differ in matters of faith, whether we or they be the true Church, is the question between us, and we are willing to have this determined by the primitive Church. If the faith then and doctrine of the Roman Church, wherein it differs from us, be the same with the faith and doctrine of the primitive Church, then that is the true Church. If it be contrary and unagreeable to the faith and doctrine of the primitive, then it is not the true Church, but a false and erroneous one.

And here we ought to make a particular inquiry and examination of all those matters of faith which are in controversy between us, and bring each of them to the test and trial, and see which Church does most agree in all those disputed doctrines with the doctrine of the primitive Church ; for here we must be allowed to examine particular doctrines that are in difference between us ; and every private Christian who is seeking for the true Church, must, if he would find it by this mark of Bellarmine, be allowed to inquire into and examine the doctrines of the present Church, and see whether they are agreeable to those of the primitive or no ; and this he must do by his private judgment, and by the best means and helps he can use to this purpose : for he is not yet supposed to have found out the true Church, but to be finding it out by this mark given of it, and still he has found it out by this mark and direction, he cannot be under its guidance and conduct, so that he must make use of his own reason and judgment at least till he has thus found it ; that is, he must have the liberty to search and inquire into the faith and doctrines of the primitive Church, and to judge for himself as well as he can, by his own best discretion, and the best helps he can use, which Church does best agree in its faith and doctrines with the primitive ; and according as he shall, upon his own examination and inquiry find, so he must choose that Church which he thinks

is the truest ; but he must not give himself up to the absolute guidance and direction of any Church, at least till he has by this way found out the true, which is another manifest advantage that we have by this note against our adversaries, who are for bearing men down with the bold pretence of infallibility, and the terrible fright of damnation out of the true Church, rather than suffering them, according to this true method, to find it out.

And as he must use his own judgment in an impartial search into the doctrines of the primitive Church, which will have as many inconveniences in it, I fear, as they are apt to object against searching to this end into the Scriptures, so he must examine all the particular doctrines that are controverted between both Churches, to see which are most agreeable to the faith of the primitive, for he cannot know this in the lump and by the gross ; and to tell him, as they sometimes do, that it is impossible for their Church to have departed from the faith of the primitive, and that the present age could not alter from the doctrine of the foregoing, and so upward ; this is not to make the primitive faith a note of the present Church, but to prevent all inquiry about this note, and to make it wholly useless and insignificant.

He that will therefore make use of this mark to know the true Church by, must be supposed and allowed to inquire into the doctrine of the primitive Church about all those particular controversies and matters of faith that are in difference between us, and must not have his inquiry stopt and precluded by any general pretences of the infallibility either of oral tradition, or of the present Church, but must freely and impartially examine the particular doctrines that are controverted, that so he may bring every one of them to the touchstone of the primitive faith, and try whether they are agreeable to the same or no, and according as he finds this, that is, whatsoever Church he finds to hold the same doctrine with the primitive in all the particular points of difference, that he must conclude to be the true Church from this note given of it.

Our adversaries do not usually care to enter into particular points of controversy, wherein they are very sensible they shall be sooner foiled and baffled, and therefore they generally wave those which are capable of being made more plain and evident to most men's capacities ; and they choose rather to dispute and wrangle about more general and intricate matters, in which there is some more room to cavil, and to amuse and

perplex themselves and others with seeming difficulties, so that though particular controversies may be made very plain, and it appears often in them as clear almost as the light, on which side the truth is, as, Whether prayers ought to be in a known tongue? Whether the communion ought to be in both kinds? Whether the Scriptures are to be read by the people? and the like; yet to avoid those, and to prevent the disadvantage of such manifest and particular points, they carry the dispute off to other things, and run into the general controversies of infallibility and church authority, and resolution of faith, and a judge in controversies, and the like; and here they think there is more room for cavil and sophistry, and they can hereby lead men, if not into scepticism and doubtfulness, yet into a maze and labyrinth, where they shall not easily get out: which way of theirs seem to me, just as if a person in a plain controversy about weight or measure, which were otherwise easy to be determined, should, to avoid that, think fit to run into the perplexed dispute, What was the true standard of weights and measures? or everlastingly wrangle about that question, Whether matter consisted of divisible or indivisible parts? and because he could raise difficulties here, and keep up a long and intricate controversy about those matters, would not be brought to yield, that a pound was heavier than an ounce, or an ell longer than an inch. I cannot but think that some of our particular controversies may be almost as clearly decided as those two, and that the running into some general ones is as remote and sophistical as the other.

We must, therefore, according to this note of the Church, not be foreprized or prevented with any general and more perplexed dispute, but we must fairly examine all the particular doctrines of the Church, and see whether they are agreeable with those of the primitive Church or no, before we can find out the true Church at present: not that the true Church we are to look for is confined to any particular place or country, but like a great homogenial body, every part of which is of the same nature with the whole; wherever the true primitive faith is professed in all the parts of it, there is a true Church, and all particular Churches being united together in the same bond of faith, do make up the catholic Church over all the world. If there were but one particular Church upon the whole earth that did profess this true faith, that alone might be called the catholic Church, because that alone had that catholic faith, which did properly make and constitute the true Church.



But this faith being common to a great many particular Churches, this makes them to be all true, and all catholic, as to faith; but as to place, it is ridiculous to call any one catholic, and as absurd as to call a part the whole; in that sense no Church is catholic; in the other, every Church is that holds the whole Christian faith. We are not therefore to seek for any particular Church that shall usurp to itself the name of catholic, in exclusion to all others; but for any Church that maintains the true catholic faith professed by the primitive, which upon that account is a true Church, and acknowledged so by this mark which is here given of it.

To find out such a one, and to distinguish it from others, we must very carefully inquire into all the particular doctrines and points of faith which are held by it, and see whether they are agreeable to the faith and doctrine of the primitive Church, and according to this method, and saving to ourselves all the fore-mentioned advantages of it, we are very willing to have the differences adjusted between us and the Church of Rome, and to have it decided by this note, whether we or they be the true Church; that is, whether we or they, in all matters of controversy between us, do most agree with the doctrine of the primitive Church.

And here is a very large scope offered to me, and what has taken up a great many volumes on both sides, so that to most people Scripture, one would think, should be a shorter and an easier, and therefore a better way to know the true Church by; but since our adversaries are not willing to leave the cause to that, we are ready to accept of the primitive Church to be judge between us; and, as has been often offered before by Bishop Jewel and others, we shall be very willing to stand to its award and decision: for however some few divines of the Reformation, before they were so well acquainted with antiquity, and when they could not so well distinguish what was genuine from what was spurious and corrupted by your Church, were at first especially more jealous and distrustful than they need to have been of it, and unwilling to venture their cause to any other sentence but that of Scripture, which had so plainly decided for them, and was indeed the most proper to be appealed to; yet the greatest number, and the most learned of the Protestant writers, have never declined the judgment of the primitive Church, but next to the inspired writings of the Apostles, have always esteemed and been willing to be determined by it: and we are well assured, that

the ancient Church, even the Roman itself, as well as the whole Christian besides, is in all material points on the Protestant side ; and a perfect stranger, if not an utter enemy, to those new articles of faith and corruptions of doctrine which have been since brought into the Western Church, and which we have for that reason protested against, because they were unknown and contrary to the faith and doctrine of the primitive Church.

It would too much exceed the set limits of this paper, to make this out so fully as might easily be done, by going through the chiefest points of difference between us. Bellarmine, in his discourse upon this note, goes wholly off from it, and chooses rather to pursue Luther and Calvin, and some other worthy Reformers, through all the paths of calumny and slander ; but I shall not follow him, to take him off from those false and injurious representations he hath made of their doctrines. If any body has the curiosity to see the art of misrepresenting in its greatest perfection, let him but read that chapter ; but if he will see it as perfectly shamed and exposed, let him read Bishop Morton's long and learned answer to it.\* We are examining the doctrines, and finding out the marks of the Church, and not of particular men ; and had Calvin, or others, taught any such doctrines, as are there very falsely laid to their charge, I know none had been concerned in them but themselves, and no Church could have been prejudiced by them any farther than it had received them. I shall therefore keep more close to Bellarmine's note, though not to his method upon it ; and I assure a late adviser,† it is not the design of confuting him, but setting men right in the way to the true religion, and the true Church, when others are so busy to draw them off by false marks and pretences, which is the cause of this undertaking.

I confess it would be too prolix, as Bellarmine says, to produce all the testimonies of the ancients, thereby to shew what was the doctrine of the primitive Church in every particular point controverted between us ; I shall therefore offer only some plain and brief remarks, by which the sense of the primitive Church may be undeniably known in most of the controversies, and by which it will appear what was the doctrine of the Church then, and how contrary that of the Church of Rome is now to it.

\* *Apologia Catholica*, p. 61 to p. 278.

† Advice to the Confuter of Bellarmine.

And here I should first begin with the most primitive, that is with the Apostolic Church, which truly and only deserves the title of being mother and mistress of all Christian Churches that ever were or shall be in the world ; it is as vain as arrogant for any later and particular Church to assume that to itself, which is but a sister-church at most, and younger than some of the rest ; and though more fine and proud, yet not half so honest and uncorrupt. This Apostolic Church, which was founded and governed by the Apostles over all the world, is the true standard of the Christian Church ; and as in revealed religion, “that which is first is true,” according to Tertullian’s axiom,\* because it comes nearest to the first pure fountain of revelation ; so, as he adds, “that is first which is from the beginning, and from the Apostles.” We should first then examine what was the faith and doctrine of the Apostolic Church, the greatest and almost only account of which we have in their own canonical writings, which are received and allowed as such by the whole Christian Church ; and in these our adversaries find so little of their own late and new doctrines, that they cannot but own that these are insufficient to authorise and establish most of them, without the authority of the present Church, and without the help of unwritten traditions.

When we produce Scripture against our adversaries, we then produce the only authentic records of the Apostolic Church, and the only certain account we have of the faith and doctrine of the most primitive Church ; let them object therefore never so much against Scripture as a rule of faith, yet whilst it contains the only sure testimony of what was taught and believed by the first Christian Church, so far as any of these doctrines are not in Scripture, so far they cannot appear to be the doctrine of the Apostolic Church, and whilst we hold all that faith, and all those doctrines that are contained in Scripture, we hold all that can be known to be so in the most pure and most primitive Church ; and whatsoever they have added to Scripture, which they will needs have to be but an imperfect rule of faith, they have added, so far as can be known, to the doctrine of the Apostolic Church : for if Scripture be not the only rule of that, yet it is the only historical account we have of it. But I shall not at present deal with them out of Scripture,

\* *Id verum quod prius, id prius quod ab initio, ab initio quod ab Apostolis.* Tertul. de Præscript. l. 4. [*Adv. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5. p. 415. Par. 1695.*]

though as it is only a record and evidence of the Apostolical faith, they will count this but a trick, I know, to draw them into a Scripture dispute, which they are mighty averse to, and which they design to avoid by an appeal from that to the primitive Church; we will go on therefore with our note, as they, I suppose, mean and understand it, and that we may not be too troublesome to them with Scripture and the Apostolic writings, we will go several ages lower, even down to those times wherein the Church was in its glorious state under the first Christian emperors, and whether their doctrines or ours were most agreeable to those of this primitive Church: let us now come briefly to inquire in some particular instances, and by some few short remarks and observations.

And first, Was any such thing as their pretended supremacy then allowed of, when, in the first General Council at Nice, “there was a limited power assigned to the Bishop of Rome, as there was to the other metropolitans of Alexandria and Antioch, who were to keep their bounds set them by ancient custom;”<sup>\*</sup> which is utterly inconsistent with an universal supremacy over the whole Church by a Divine right, as is since pretended and claimed contrary to all antiquity. For the next General Council appoints “the Bishop of Constantinople to have prerogatives of honour next to the Bishop of Rome, because that was New Rome;”<sup>†</sup> so that it was the imperial city of Rome which gave the honour of being the first bishop in the Church, and not a Divine institution, or a succession from St. Peter; and when Constantinople, by the Emperor’s removing thither, became the next great city, the bishops partook of the honour of the city: and, in the fourth General Council at Chalcedon, had for that reason equal privileges conferred upon him with the Bishop of old Rome;‡ as the Fathers expressly

<sup>\*</sup> Τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔζη κρατεῖτω, τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ Λιβύῃ καὶ Πενταπόλει, ὥστε τὸν Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπίσκοπον πάντων τούτων ἔχειν τὴν ἐξουσίαν· Ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῷ ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ τοῦτο σύνηθές ἐστιν· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐπαρχίαις τὰ πρεσβεῖα σώζεσθαι ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Concil. Nicen. Can. 6. [Labbe, Concil. vol. 2. p. 36. Venet. 1728.]

<sup>†</sup> Τὸν μέντοι Κωνσταντίνου πόλεως ἐπίσκοπον ἔχειν τὰ πρεσβεῖα τῆς τιμῆς μετὰ τὸν τῆς Ῥώμης ἐπίσκοπον, διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὴν νέαν Ῥώμην. Concil. Constantinop. Can. 3. [Ibid. p. 1126.]

<sup>‡</sup> Καὶ γὰρ τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης διὰ τὸ βασιλεύειν τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην, οἱ πατέρες εἰκότως ἀποδεδώκασιν τὰ πρεσβεῖα, καὶ, τῷ αὐτῷ σκόπῳ κινούμενοι, οἱ ἐκατὸν πεντήκοντα θεοφιλέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι τὰ ἴσα πρεσβεῖα ἀπένευμαν τῷ τῆς νείας Ῥώμης ἀγιωτάτῳ θρόνῳ. Concil. Chalced. Can. 28. [Ibid. vol. 4. p. 769. Lut. Par. 1671.]



declare : to which I shall add the famous case of appeals, which was challenged about the year 418, by Pope Zosimus over the African Church, not by Divine right, but by a pretended ecclesiastical canon, which was found afterwards to be forged, and the power of the Church of Rome to receive appeals, or to judge the causes of other Churches, was fully disowned and disclaimed ;\* and this, with the exemption of the Churches of Milan, Ravenna, and Aquileia, from the jurisdiction of the Church of Rome, though they were so near neighbours to it, even in Italy itself, is enough to give full satisfaction to any reasonable man what a different opinion the primitive Church had of the Church of Rome, from what it now has of itself, concerning an universal supremacy, and of its being the mother and mistress of all Churches.

The next most peculiar doctrine of Popery is transubstantiation, which, as it was formerly owned by Valentia† and Cusanus,‡ and a great many of the schoolmen, Scotus, Durandus, and others,§ not to have been the doctrine of the primitive Church, so it has been lately proved at large by one of their own communion ;|| though if for that reason it may be thrown out from being an article of faith by the members of the Roman Church, they will leave but very few proper to themselves, according to the principle of that gentleman, to wit, the making not the present, but the primitive Church, a rule of their faith ; which, if they will universally follow, it will lead them quite out of the Roman Church, as well as out of that single error of it ; we have such excellent treatises of late about this,¶ which prove it beyond all exception, and beyond all answer, to be no doctrine of the primitive Church, that I shall add nothing about it, but only these two observations.

First, That it appears not by any liturgy, or eucharistic form that was ever used by the Church, no not by the Roman canon itself, which is much ancients than this doctrine, and therefore not so conformed to it ; that the Church ever used any prayer to this purpose at the eucharist, that the substance of the

\* Concil. Carthag. 6. [Ibid. vol. 3. p. 423. Venet. 1728.]

† De Transub. l. 2. c. 7.

‡ Exercit. l. 6. Ser. 40.

§ Vid. Præf. ad Johan. Major.

|| A Treatise written by an author of the Church of Rome touching Transubstantiation.

¶ See Discourse of Transubstantiation. Transubstantiation no Doctrine of the primitive Fathers. The Doctrine of the Trinity and Transubstantiation compared. 1 par.

sacramental elements should be changed or done away, and the flesh and blood of Christ substituted instead of them, under the species or accidents, but only that they might be made the body and blood of Christ by the Spirit's coming down upon them; so that it was only a spiritual and sacramental, not a substantial change of them that was ever prayed for, or ever believed; for if the Church had always had this faith it would surely have sometimes prayed in it.

Secondly, I observe, that in those times when this doctrine came first into the Church, which was a little before Berengarius, it was so new and raw, that it was not fully digested, nor perfectly understood even by those who then held it, as appears by that blundering recantation which was drawn up for him, after the examination of no less than three Popes and five Synods, wherein he is made to say, "that after consecration the true body and blood of Christ is not only sacramentally, but sensibly and truly handled and broke by the hands of the priests, and ground by the teeth of the faithful."\* This sensible and true handling, and breaking and grinding Christ's body, is so strange and dreadful a thing, that the Glossator observes this upon it, that "unless you do understand these words of Berengarius in a sound sense,"† that is, contrary to what the words signify and mean, "you will fall into a greater heresy than that of Berengarius himself;" by which it appears that this monster of transubstantiation, as a great man of their own afterwards calls it,‡ was so unformed and misshapen a thing at that time, that it was a sign it was then but new come into the world, and had need of being farther licked into a better shape.

If transubstantiation were then but new, those other doctrines which have issued from it, and are its proper production, could not be old, such as adoration of the sacrament, communion in one kind, solitary masses, and the proper and propitiatory sacrifice of the mass: and therefore I shall not say any thing of them, since their date will be owned to be as late as that of transubstantiation; and though they may not follow from it, yet they cannot be maintained or believed without it;

\* Post consecrationem verum corpus et sanguinem Christi, sensualiter non solum sacramento, sed veritate manibus sacerdotum tractari, frangi, et fidelium dentibus atteri. Grat. de Consec. dist. 2. cap. [42. Corp. Jur. Can. vol. 1. p. 1932. Lugd. 1671.]

† Nisi sane intelligas verba Berengarii, in majorem incidis hæresin, quam ipse habuit. Glos. ib.

‡ Perrone. See the excellent Preface to a Discourse on the Holy Eucharist, in Two great Points.

so that what has been said against the one takes away the very foundation of the other.

As to the number of the sacraments, though the Council of Trent has declared this to be exactly seven, and made it an article of faith to believe so; yet no man sure will have the confidence to say that this number was determined by the primitive Church, when they can bring no author who makes any mention of such a number, till eleven hundred years after Christ; and Bellarmine thinks it unreasonable "we should require them to shew this either in the Scriptures or the Fathers;"\* though if it be an article of faith, which must be believed upon pain of damnation, there ought to be something to shew for it, one would think, out of one of them.

Was the necessity of auricular confession a doctrine of the primitive Church, when in the time of Peter Lombard, he tells us, "that learned men were found to have different sentiments about it, and that the doctors delivered themselves variously and differently upon it,"† and therefore it could not be the doctrine of the Church then? But of this see a learned treatise written on purpose.

Was the Roman purgatory a doctrine of the primitive Church, of which Alphonsus à Castro confesses, "there is almost no mention of it in any of the ancient writers?"‡ Bishop Fisher§ is of the same mind with him, and that old Christian custom of celebrating the day of their friend's death as a festival and day of rejoicing, because they were then released from all pain and sorrow,|| is to me a plain argument they did not in the least believe any such thing.

What shall we think then of indulgences as they relate to purgatory? Had the ancient Church any such notion of them? But mercly as abatements of canonical penance, and purgatory, I suppose, is no part of that. Does not Alphonsus own, "that

\* Non debere adversarios petere, ut ostendamus in Scripturis aut Patribus nomen septenarii numeri sacramentorum. Bellar. de Effect. Sacram. l. 2. c. 24. [vol. 3. p. 105. col. 2. Prag. 1721.]

† In his enim etiam docti diversa sentire inveniuntur, quia super his varia ac penè adversa tradidisse videntur Doctores. Lomb. Sent. l. 4. dist. 17. [p. 3632. Col. Agr. 1666.]

‡ De Purgatorio fere nulla in antiquis Scriptoribus mentio. Alphons. de Castro contra Hæres. l. 8. p. 115. [p. 578. Par. 1571.]

§ Roffens. contra Luther. Art. 18. [fol. 132. Col. 1624.]

|| Nos non nativitatis diem celebramus, cum sit dolorum atque tentationum introitus, sed mortis diem celebramus, utpote omnium dolorum depositionem. Comment. in Job. apud Origen. l. 3.

they were received very late into the Church?"\* And Cajetan says, "there is no authority of Scripture, or of any Fathers, Greek or Latin, that bring them to our knowledge."†

Prayers and oblations for the dead, I confess, are a very ancient practice; but I know no doctrine the primitive Church had concerning them, but of the communion of saints, which was both in the Church militant and triumphant; and they are so far from bordering upon the Roman doctrine of purgatory, that they utterly destroy it, for they were offered for those who were owned to be in happiness, and could never be supposed to go to purgatory; to wit, for saints and martyrs and Apostles, and even for the Virgin Mary herself, as appears by the ancient liturgies.‡

As to prayers in an unknown tongue, this cannot, I hope, be said to be the practice of the primitive Church; and if the language of Rome had been so unalterable, as she pretends her faith is, her prayers had been in a known tongue now; but I doubt they are both equally changeable.

As to the worship of saints and angels, and the offering up prayers to them and to the blessed Virgin, I shall offer but one consideration out of antiquity, which does for ever destroy all manner of worship, of what degree soever, to any but the true God; and that is, the charge of idolatry, which was laid by all the orthodox Fathers, against the Arians, for worshipping and praying to Christ, when they believed him not to be the true God, but only a creature, though of the most exalted nature: this does so fully shew the sense of the Church against all worship, be it of what kind it will, to any creature (for it was not the highest and most sovereign worship which the Arians were supposed, or charged to give to Christ), that it is the plainest thing in the world that there could be no manner of worship *then* to saints or angels, or to the blessed Virgin, as there is now in the Roman Church. But he that will see the clearest account of antiquity in this matter, let him consult a most excellent discourse "concerning the Worship of the blessed Virgin and the Saints, with an account of the beginnings and rise of it amongst Christians, against Monsieur de Meaux."

\* Earum usus in Ecclesia videtur sero receptus. Alphons. de Castro, l. 8. p. 115. [Ut supra.]

† Cajet. Opusc. 15. c.

‡ Liturg. Egyptiac. [J. A. Assem. Codex Liturg. vol. 7. Rom. 1734.] Liturg. Chrysost. [Oper. vol. 12. p. 1011. Par. 1838.]



As to the worship of images, it is too well known at what time, and with what opposition that was brought into the Western Church, and how great a part of it did then declare against them ; so that it was impossible that should have been the doctrine of the primitive Church, which was with so great a struggle and violence brought into the Roman, at the latter end of the seventh century. As to the first ages, it is plain from the instance of Epiphanius and the Council of Eliberis, that they would not suffer images and pictures in their Churches, and at first hardly thought the very making of them to be lawful, as appears from Clemens Alexandrinus.

But I must not insist on particulars; I offer only some few undeniable breviates of antiquity, by which it cannot but evidently appear to any ingenious man, that these doctrines of the Roman Church, which distinguish it from the Reformed, were not the doctrines of the primitive Church, but are plainly and notoriously contrary to the best antiquity: though they are very apt to brag of that upon all occasions, yet how little they esteem it, and how conscious they are to themselves that it is not for their purpose, and that it is truly against them, I shall by some general remarks unquestionably demonstrate, and make them, if they have any shame, confess it themselves. And

First, What mean their Expurgatory Indices, whereby they have corrected so many Fathers, and blotted out and expunged so many sentences out of the writings of the most ancient doctors of the Church, and by new additions made them speak contrary to themselves in so many places of their works, if they were not sensible that those ancient authors, who bring down to us the doctrine of the primitive Church, were in many things witnesses against them, and bore evident testimony against their new opinions? This is so plain a confession, that antiquity is against them, and renders them so much self-condemned, that they intended to have kept these Indices very private, and it was only by chance that we came to the first knowledge of them. Our learned James has acquainted the world with the mystery of them, as he calls it, but it is so plain a mystery of iniquity, that it needs nothing to discover the fraud and villany of it. To raze ancient records is a crime of the highest nature; and they who are guilty of it, as the Church of Rome is in the greatest degree, by thus purging and correcting the Fathers, by an inquisition the most cruel of any other, and that appointed by the Council of Trent, need no

other proof to convict them, that that cause which stands in need of such arts, is not to be defended without them; and this is such a note of a Church, that it brands and stigmatizes it with another mark than that of antiquity.

2. Besides the correcting, or rather corrupting so many Fathers which were genuine monuments of antiquity, the counterfeiting so many false ones, and obtruding so many spurious authors upon the world, is a plain evidence of the want of true antiquity. This is like suborning of witnesses, which is enough to make all the world suspect, that what they are brought for, and what they depose, is not true; it is no other than forging old writings and instruments to help out the known weakness of a cracked title. Thus the Decretal Epistles were counterfeited, to prop up the Pope's spiritual power, and Constantine's Donation to establish his temporal. The cheat of the first was so evident from the style, being so sordid and so unlike those ages, and yet being so like itself in all parts, as shewed it to have throughout but one author, that though they were formerly made use of, and did great service, yet they are now laid by as too gross to be owned by most of the learned men of that Church; and the other, though it be still defended by some of them, yet has such marks of forgery, as makes most of them confess it; but great numbers are there of forged and spurious authors, whose testimonies are still produced by these writers, for those doctrines and opinions which are destitute of true antiquity, a collection of which is given us by our James in his "Bastardy of the false Fathers;" and all those critics which have wrote censures upon the Fathers' works cannot but own it. I cannot charge this upon any public act of the Church, as that of purging and correcting the Fathers, but most of the writers who bring such large and false musters of the Fathers are guilty of it, and particularly some of their late books amongst us.\* We have a very great and early instance of this notorious way of forgery in the very head and governors of that Church, and that was in falsifying the Nicene Canons, and thrusting in a canon of a particular synod among those of a General Council; thereby to claim a power of appeals to themselves, which was such an imposture, as shews what some men will do to gain power and authority over other Churches, and what an unfaithful preserver a Church may be, that pretends

\* Consensus Veterum, Nubes Testium.

to be infallible, not only of oral tradition, but even of writings too, for they had copies without question of the Council of Nice; and if the other great Churches of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, had not had authentic and agreeing copies to the contrary, the Churches of Africa had been run down by one of the most palpable forgeries in the world, and the Church of Rome would, no doubt, have made a great deal more use of it afterwards than upon that particular occasion. But,

3. Though antiquity is to be sometimes suppressed and stifled, that it may say nothing against them, and sometimes suborned and counterfeited, that it may bear false witness for them; and though they generally make a fair show, and a great noise with the pretence of it, yet they cannot but often betray the little esteem and regard which they have of it. Thus, to give an instance or two: in the famous question of the Virgin's immaculate conception, though the Fathers are acknowledged to be generally against it, and their own Bishop Canus\* reckons up St. Ambrose, St. Austin, St. Chrysostom, and a great many more, who expressly assert her being conceived in original sin, and says, "that this is the unanimous opinion of all the Fathers who happen to make mention of it,"† yet he declares "this to be a very weak and infirm argument which is drawn from the authority of all the Fathers, and that, notwithstanding, the contrary opinion is piously and probably maintained and defended in the Church;"‡ and Bellarmine says, "they are not to be reckoned among Catholics,"§ who are of another opinion, though it be contrary, it seems, to all antiquity. Thus at other times Bellarmine shifts off the authority of St. Cyprian, when he plainly opposes that of the Pope, and says, "that he mortally erred and offended in so doing;"|| and concerning Justin Martyr,

\* De Sanctorum Auctoritate, l. 7. loc. Theolog. c. 1. Lovan. [p. 346. Colon. Agr 1605.]

† Sancti namque omnes, qui in ejus rei mentionem incidere, uno ore asseverarunt, beatam Virginem in peccato originali conceptam, hoc vid. Ambros. hoc August. hoc Chrysost. &c. ib. [p. 348.]

‡ Infirmum tamen ex omnium auctoritate argumentum ducitur, quin potius contraria sententia et probabiliter et piè in Ecclesia defenditur. Ib.

§ Inter Catholicos non sunt numerandi. Bellarm. de Amis. Grat. l. 4. c. 15. [vol. 4. p. 140. col. 1. Prag. 1721.]

|| Videtur mortaliter peccasse. Bellarm. l. 4. de Rom. Pont. c. 7. [Ibid. vol. 1. p. 459. col. 1.]

Irenæus, and others, "their opinion," he says, "cannot be defended from great error,"\* when it is against his own; thus also of St. Hierom, "he was of that opinion; but it is false, and shall be refuted."† And to mention no more, though they stick not upon all occasions to slight and contemn antiquity, when it will not make for them, Baronius, one of their greatest searchers into antiquity, but as great a corrupter of it, who had taken that oath, I suppose, prescribed by Pope Pius IV., not to receive or expound Scripture but according to the uniform consent of the Fathers, yet doth unwarily, but ingenuously confess, that "the holy Fathers, whom for their great learning we justly call the doctors of the Church, yet the catholic (that is Roman) Church doth not always follow, nor in all things the interpretation of Scripture."‡ They can go off it seems from their oath, and from the Fathers too, when they think fit; and they are not always bound to keep so close to antiquity, as they give out at other times, and pretend they do. But in the last place:

4. The determinations and decrees of the present Church are the only things they stick to, and it is the authority and infallibility of that which they rely more upon, and a thousand times more regard than all antiquity, or the whole sense of the primitive Church. They pretend indeed, not to determine any thing contrary either to Scripture or to the primitive Church, but they make themselves the only judges of both; they tell us they make no new doctrines, nor no innovations in faith, but they keep to themselves the power of declaring what doctrines are new and what are not; and then I can see little difference between their making, and their declaring new articles of faith, since it is their declaring makes them to be believed and received as such, when they were not to be so before; and how then does this differ from making them articles of faith? Bellarmine speaks plainly out, though against his own note, when he says, "The Church of later time hath

\* Eorum sententiam non video, quo pacto ab errore possumus defendere. Bellarm. de Beat. § 1. l. c. 6. [Ibid. vol. 2. p. 397. col. 1.]

† Videtur Hieronymus in ea sententia fuisse, sed falsa est et suo loco refellenda. Bellarm. de Pontif. Rom. l. 1. c. 8. [Ibid. vol. 4. p. 289. col. 1.]

‡ Nam sanctissimos Patres, quos Doctores Ecclesiæ ob illorum sublimem eruditionem merito nominamus, in interpretatione Scripturarum non semper ac in omnibus catholica Ecclesia sequitur. Baron. Annal. Eccles. an. 34. n. 213. p. 218. Colon.



power not only to explain and declare, but constitute and command those things which belong to faith.”\* If the present Church has a power to make more doctrines and articles be believed as necessary to salvation than were believed by the primitive Church ; then it may make additions to the Christian faith, and make that necessary to be believed at one time which was not at another : if it has not this power, let them declare it, and not count others heretics who receive all the ancient creeds, and hold the faith of all the ancient Councils, and believe all those doctrines that the whole primitive Church, in all places, and at all times, ever held. Here with *Lirinensis*, we fix and set our feet, and here we resolve to stand and keep our ground, and not be moved with every wind of doctrine that shall blow out of a new quarter, and that a small part of the present Church shall declare to be an article of faith, when it was never so declared by the primitive. To say that they have made no new articles of faith in their Church, but only the same articles made explicit, which were implicit before in the primitive Church, is as if they should say, there are no new men in the world since Adam or Noah, but only the same men that were before implicit in their loins are now explicitly born into the world. Thus the Church, though it be never so fruitful in producing doctrines and articles of faith that never were before in the Church, yet makes nothing new ; and however spurious its doctrines may be, and however degenerating from the faith of our forefathers, yet it must be said to be of the same kind and species. Faith it seems, in the primitive Church, was but an embryo, or like a small seed or kernel, implicitly containing all the parts entire, but in little ; but when it is grown up and enlarged by the explicit declaration of the Church, then it may swell into a mighty bigness, and increase even into the largest Tridentine bulk, and be it never so unlike the former, yet it must be called the same still. But if this implicit faith was sufficient for the primitive Church, why may it not be so for the present, and what need have we of a more explicit faith to save us now, than they had to save them then ? All the essential articles of Christian faith are to be explicitly believed at all times, and it is strange that we must be now obliged to a more explicit faith, and a more implicit obedience, than the primitive Church was ever acquainted with : but after all, I hope those doctrines that are contrary to the doctrines of

\* Tract. de potest. Sum. Pontif.

the primitive Church, were not then implicitly believed by it; and if they were not, I am sure most of the doctrines of the Roman Church, as different from the Reformed, were not her implicit doctrines: but unless error may be folded up with truth, and one part of a contradiction may be involved in the other, the late corruptions and decrees of the Roman Church, in her Trent Articles, were no way contained in the quite different doctrines of the primitive Church. And thus, because I have gone too far with this discourse, I must abruptly take leave of Bellarmine, and his Church; though I resolve, by God's grace, to keep always to this his true note of the Church, and therefore to that Church in which I am, which is the most agreeable to the primitive of any in the world, both as to its doctrine and every thing else.

THE  
SEVENTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED:

VIZ.

THE UNION OF THE MEMBERS AMONG THEMSELVES,  
AND WITH THE HEAD.

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*Septima Nota est Unio Membrorum cum Capite, inter se et cum Capite.*  
Bellar. Lib. iv. cap. x. De Notis Ecclesiæ.

THE Church, as the Cardinal observes, is called in the Scriptures “one body, one spouse, one sheepfold:” but he that infers from hence, that unity is a proper mark of the true Church, ought to be very well assured, that the head and members are united no where but in “the body of Christ,” and that the harlot cannot be *one* as well as the spouse, &c. But the world has hitherto been persuaded, that bare unity is a character to be found upon societies of different natures and contrary designs; that of itself it infers neither good nor evil, and may belong to a body of rebels, no less than to an army of loyal subjects. Unity is then indeed a good mark, when it is a duty; as it is a duty when the terms of union are so. For which reason, the union of the Church is of all others the most excellent, because all men ought to follow that truth and goodness which are necessary to salvation; and these are best preserved and maintained by union amongst those who follow them: for which reasons also it is celebrated in the Gospel with a variety of expressions. But to argue from hence, that the union of members among themselves, and with their Head, is a proper note of the true Church, is just as if I should conclude, upon seeing a thousand men marching in good order, and with equal pace after their leader, that therefore of necessity they must be going to York.

Notwithstanding therefore this argument from unity being attributed to the Church, the Cardinal did not think fit to leave his mark so very loose and common, but slips into the mention of those things wherein the unity of the Church con-

sists, as he pretends. He tells us, that the head with which the members are united is the Pope. And as for their union among themselves, he afterwards proves that all Catholics must needs agree in all points of faith, "since they all submit their own sense to the sense of one and the same chief pastor, guiding the Church from the chair of Peter, with the advice of other pastors." So that now we know what he means by the union of the members to their head, and among themselves; that is to say, "the union of the members of the Roman Church to the Pope as to their head, and their union among themselves in believing all that he teaches from the chair of St. Peter," &c.

Which note does, for its part, make good what was observed at first, concerning the general design of these notes, which is not so much to describe to us the proper characters of a true Christian Church, as to prove that the Church of Rome is the only true Church. Whatever the Cardinal insinuated at first, he seemed to be very sensible that the union of members with the head, and among themselves, was too large a note to fit no other society but a true Christian Church. Now if in restraining his note he had understood Christ by the Head; and by the union of the members to one another, an agreement in the faith that was once delivered to the saints; this indeed would have served for the finding out of a true Church; but then this was too large for the Cardinal's purpose, which was to find no other Church to be true but the Roman. And therefore by the Head it was necessary to understand the Pope, and by the union of the members, an agreement in all that doctrine which is taught by the Roman Church. For it was to be hoped that this would mark all the Roman communion *in*, but it would most undoubtedly mark all other Christians *out* of the only true Church. For this is the admirable reasoning to which it leads: that is the true Church which acknowledges the Pope for its head, and for its faith professes the doctrine, whatever it be, that is taught in the Church of Rome, and from hence it must needs follow, that the Church of Rome is the only true Church. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

And if the Cardinal had left the matter thus in short, he had in my mind done better for his Church, and his reasoning had been less exceptionable than he has made it in the pursuance of his enlargements. When a man has to do with an untractable piece of matter, it often happens, that the more he strives to fashion it to his own purpose, the farther he is



from it. And so this great man, by labouring overmuch to make this his mark of unity utterly unserviceable to any other Church, has given it that figure at last, which makes it unfit for his own, as we shall see in convenient place.

For I shall endeavour to make out these three things :

*I. That the Unity here offered is no true note of the Church.*

*II. That if it were, yet the Roman Church has it not.*

*III. That that Unity which is indeed a note of the Church we have, and that in a much greater degree than they.*

*I. That the Unity here offered is no true note of the Church;* which I shall shew concerning both his instances of it.

And first, Concerning union with the Pope as head of the Church: that this should be a note of the Church, is a pretence that hath neither Scripture, reason, nor antiquity for it, but all against it.

1. For Scripture; the Cardinal offers not any proof from thence of his presumption, which yet had been very requisite to a point of so vast a consequence, if the Scripture had afforded any testimony to his purpose.

That the Pope should be at the head of the Church and the centre of its unity; that union to him should be an essential character of the Church, and the very being of it depend upon him: but that the Scripture should not give us the least intimation of it, is a thing so perfectly unaccountable, that the very silence of the Scripture in a matter of this high nature, is to us a sufficient argument that the Apostles knew nothing of any such constitution.

Especially, since they did not forget to make plain and frequent mention of another Head of the Church, to which all the members are to be united, *viz.* our Lord Jesus Christ. They tell us,\* “that when God raised him from the dead, he gave him to be the HEAD over all things to the Church, which is HIS BODY:” that† “as they are members in one body; so we being many, are ONE BODY IN CHRIST:” that‡ “as the body is one and hath many members . . . . so also is CHRIST,” *i. e.* Christ and the Church, the whole being denominated from the Head, for we “are the BODY OF

\* Eph. i. 20, 22, 23.

† Rom. xii. 4, 5.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 12, 27.

CHRIST." We are told \* "that he is the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole body is fitly joined together," &c.: that he is† "the Head of the Church, and the Saviour of the body:" that he ‡ "is the Head of the body the Church." And much more to this purpose might be added. Now when the Church is so frequently declared to be one body, and to this one body, one Head is so frequently assigned and no more; what can any man, who is not possessed with prejudice, make of this, but that there is no other Head of the Church besides him who is so often mentioned as such, and that by the same reason that any man goes about to add another head to the Church, he might if he pleased find out another Church to the head: nor does it help at all that they pretend the Pope to be but the vicarious and ministerial head of the Church, since if without union to him we are out of the Church, and have no part in Christ, it was necessary that this pretended vicarious head should have been as plainly and frequently expressed, as we know the true and real Head to have been.

Nay, it was something more necessary, since a very slender intimation might have been sufficient to assure us, that He, § who "is the image of the invisible God, by whom all things were created," and "by whom all things consist, is also the Head of the body of the Church:" that He || "in whom we have redemption through his blood," who is the "Saviour of the body," and for our sakes humbled himself to the death of the cross, should be also "the Head of the body," and be exalted to be Head over all things "unto his Church;" He, I say, in whom infinite power and goodness met. But that there should be another head given to the whole Church, to be united to which was no less necessary than union to Christ himself; and that this catholic head should be no other than a sinful man, and he very often none of the best; this was so far removed from self-evidence, or even probability, that it certainly needed very express mention, if not frequent inculcation. Now that he should be frequently mentioned as Head of the Church, who in comparison needed not to be mentioned at all; and that no mention at all should be made of another head of the Church that needs it very much, is for them to give an account of, who make union to this latter head no less necessary to a part in the body of Christ, than union to the former.

\* Eph. iv. 16.

† Ib. v. 23.

‡ Col. i. 18.

§ Col. i. 15, [16, 17,] 18.

|| Verse 14.

Which account will be much harder to be given, inasmuch as there is no mention at all of this pretended head, where there was the most fair and inviting occasion for it that can be well imagined. Thus St. Paul, shewing what gifts Christ bestowed upon his Church after his ascension, saith,\* “He gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers . . . . for the edifying of the body of Christ . . . . and that we might grow up into him in all things, which is the Head even Christ.” Now here we do not only find our Saviour represented as the Head of his Church, and we as the members of his body, but that amongst the several subordinate members of which his body consists, there is no mention of that most necessary member of all (if I may call it a member), the vicarious head of the Church. For it is not said that he gave first Peter to be Head of his Church, and then Apostles, &c. But he gave, first, some Apostles, and those not as heads of his Church neither, but as principal members of it. And in the beginning of the same chapter, where he describes the unity of the Church, he says, there is “one body, and one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.”

Now I would fain know whether the Cardinal would have omitted here “one visible Head of the Church, in which all ought to be united:” and then let any man tell me why St. Paul did. He had the like occasion in another place, where having said much concerning the unity of the body of Christ; “Ye are,” saith he, “the body of Christ, and members in particular; and God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers,”† &c. Now I say, if this visible head of unity had been elsewhere mentioned never so often, he ought not to have been omitted in any of these three places; much less if he were mentioned nowhere else. But no notice being taken of this head elsewhere, nor here either, is little less than a demonstration, that there was no such head to be taken notice of.

When any one shall pretend to so high a prerogative and vast dependence as this implies, we may in reason expect he should be able to produce some very good evidence of his right to it. And therefore the mere silence of the Scripture is pre-

\* Eph. iv. 11, 12, 15.

† 1 Cor. xii. 27, 28.

judice enough against the pretence. But the silence of the Scripture, in such a place as I have produced, is a direct argument against it.

Nay, lastly, the Scripture is so far from giving the least intimation of any such headship, where the mention of it was unavoidable, if it had been a Divine constitution, that it seems expressly to oppose it. For St. Paul speaking against those contentions which happened, by one saying, "I am of Paul," another, "I am of Apollos," a third, "I am of Cephas," he does not oppose Cephas or Peter to the rest, as if it were lawful for them to say, "I am of Peter," but not "I am of Paul," &c. but utterly reproves all such distinctions, and requires them all to be united in Christ. "Is Christ divided?" says he, "was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" Plainly shewing, that to establish any mortal man as the centre of union in the Christian Church, is in effect, to divide the authority of Christ; and that if we unite ourselves to such a head, we may as well be baptized in his name, and have him for our Saviour too.

2. As little foundation is there in reason for this headship of the Pope over the whole body of Christ; since it will necessarily require that all the Christian Churches in the world, even those that are at greatest distance from one another, be reduced under his government, and depend upon his authority; the administration of which vast power and trust is incompatible to any mortal man. Being vested in a wise and good man, it could be of little benefit to a body so diffusive as the catholic Church; but in the hands of a weak or vicious person, it would become the instrument of pride, tyranny, oppression, and divisions. A small bishopric requires the utmost care and prudence to manage it aright; but what ability, without a miracle, could be sufficient for a tolerable discharge of so great a trust, as the inspection and government of the whole Church from one end of the earth to the other? But the temptations to abuse such power would be infinite, and the abuses themselves intolerable, and hardly capable of redress: as we see also by no small experience. For after that that power was pretended to at Rome, and submitted to by the Western Church, the scandals and miseries of this part of Christendom grew to such an extremity, that it could not be dissembled; insomuch that the cardinals and prelates appointed by Pope Paul III., to advise concerning



the state of the Church, assured him, that she\* “was just falling headlong into ruin;” and that the chief cause was that the Pope’s will and pleasure had been the rule of all his doings. And he that shall consider what a lewd and filthy place Rome itself was grown, by their own confession, may observe from thence, how likely it is that the government of the catholic Church should thrive in one man’s hand after another, who are too busy to attend upon the reformation of most scandalous and crying disorders at home.

3. Neither is there any colour in antiquity for this headship of the Pope, although they are the primitive Fathers upon whose authority chiefly they would support this usurpation. The testimonies which the Cardinal has chosen for his purpose, are so far from it, that one would wonder to see so weighty a superstructure laid upon so weak a foundation. Thus, because St. Irenæus says, that “every Church, *i. e.* the faithful who are all about, must needs resort to the Roman Church, because of the most powerful principality,” *i. e.* because the imperial city drew the business of the world to itself, and by consequence, Christians in all parts had occasion of recourse to it; therefore the bishop of that city was the head of all Churches in the world: because St. Cyprian called the Roman the principal Church, “from whence the unity of the priests did arise, and the matrix and root of the catholic Church,” therefore he could mean nothing else, but that union to the Bishop of Rome is absolutely necessary to a part in Christ and his Church: whereas it is most evident, that elsewhere he did freely assert the independence of other bishops upon that bishop, and of other episcopal Churches upon that Church: and consequently, that he called it the “principal” Church, as being constituted in the principal city (so Rigaltius acknowledgeth); and the spring of “sacerdotal unity, and the root of the Catholic Church,” because bishops having occasion either to come up to Rome, or to send thither from all parts, did by their unity with the Church there, manifestly declare their union to one another, which was a convenience accruing to that Church (and to all others) from the imperial city in which it was constituted: but by no means inferring that other Churches were more obliged to union with her, than she with others. Again, because it was sometimes a mark of an orthodox and catholic Christian to be joined in com-

\* Consil. de Emend. Eccl. in Richer. l. 4.

munion with the Roman bishop ; therefore it must always be so, and it can never happen that a man should be united to the Church, and disjoined from the Pope. Because St. Hierom referred himself to the chair of Peter when Damasus sate in it ; therefore he would have done the same to his predecessor Liberius, after he had communicated with the Arians. Of the same kind is the argument from Optatus. Finally, because St. Augustine thought that Cecilian had reason to value his communion with the Roman Church more than the multitude of his enemies, inasmuch as the “principality of an Apostolical chair had always flourished there ;” therefore the Bishop of Rome is the head of the Church : as if there were no other Apostolical chair besides that at Rome ; and as if the communion of no other Church was to be esteemed, when a bishop meets with unreasonable opposition, but one that is by virtue of her chair mistress of all the rest. For what he says out of St. Augustine in *Psal. contra partem Donati*, it has had its answer, p. 287. Pope Leo indeed speaks a little more to the purpose, but without any authority, as being a witness in his own cause. For it was but a few years before, that Zosimus, Boniface, and Celestin, had set up a small pretence to an universal headship, though nothing was got by it, but a notable rebuke from the African Fathers, whereof St. Augustine was one, for introducing a worldly pride into the Church. But no wonder if those Popes that followed, still kept their eye upon that power which their predecessors could not as yet compass.

On the other side, it appears by most unquestionable evidence that the primitive Fathers knew no greater necessity of being united to the Roman, than to any other catholic or orthodox bishop. When Pope Victor took upon him to excommunicate the Arian Churches for not observing Easter as the Roman did, they were so far from thinking a union with him as their head necessary to their being members of the catholic Church, that they called a Synod of their own, reprehended the Pope’s arrogance, and resolved to adhere to their own custom. St. Cyprian, Firmilian, and the Africans did the like, in opposition to Pope Stephen ; Firmilian\* plainly telling them, that while he thought to excommunicate all them from himself, he had but excommunicated himself from them. In ancient times there was no shadow of any such headship in the Pope,

\* Apud Cypr. Ep. 75. p. 228. Ed. Oxon. [1682.]

as of late ages has been contended for. He was treated with no other titles of respect than other bishops were, who were called Popes and Vicars of Christ no less than he, as he was by them styled their colleague and brother, no less than they by him. In respect of presidency over particular Churches, his jurisdiction was confined as well as theirs; in respect of the common care of the whole Church, each of them was deemed to have an authority and a trust no way inferior to his: all which our adversaries do full well understand, who are but a little conversant in St. Cyprian, if they would but speak what they know. But because St. Hierom's complaint to Damasus is insisted upon by the Cardinal, let St. Hierom be heard speaking to this very point so clearly, that we cannot desire he should have been more express: "Wherever," saith he, "there is a bishop, whether at Rome, or at Eugubium, or Constantinople, or Rhegium, or Alexandria, or Thanis; he is of the same worth, and of the same priesthood. The advantage of wealth, and the disadvantage of poverty, does not make a bishop to be higher or lower; but they are all successors of the Apostles."\* To conclude this point, Popes have been anciently censured, condemned and excommunicated, when they were thought to have deserved it. Julius† was excommunicated by the Eastern bishops; Liberius anathematized by St. Hilary; Vigilius excommunicated by the Africans; Honorius condemned by the sixth General Council. Did these Fathers take the Pope for their common head and the centre of catholic union?

Some Popes have been heretics, as the Romanists themselves cannot deny; and therefore time has been when it was so far from being a note of the catholic Church to be united to the Pope, that it was impossible so to be without separation from the catholic Church.

But the Cardinal has a very notable argument to prove the necessity of this union, *viz.* Experience; since those Churches have withered away, that are divided from this head the Pope: witness the Asiatic and African Churches, anciently famous for numerous Councils, for learned and holy men, but since their schism from the Roman Church, reduced to obscurity and plunged into gross ignorance.

To which it might be enough to answer, that although where

\* Hier. ad Evagr. Ep. 85.

† See Vindication of the Answer to some late Papers, p. 6, &c.

the sin is flagrant, and beyond controversy, there the calamity that befalls the offender, may, without breach of charity, or impious intrusion into the councils of Providence, be well deemed the effect of God's justice: yet in a dispute about right and truth, to take advantage from the afflictions of a man or of a Church, and to make them an argument against the oppressed side, is barbarously uncharitable and wicked, and becomes none but those who care not by what means they come to their end.

But not to pry into the secrets of Divine Providence, might it not have served the Cardinal's turn to assign the afflictions and ignorance of those Churches to the irruptions of their enemies upon them, who at length prevailed and utterly destroyed some of them, and to this day hold the rest in slavery? If this be not enough, what if one should add, that their not uniting themselves to the Pope was indeed one cause of their misfortunes, who had much rather see those ancient and glorious Churches laid waste by infidels, than saved by the united arms of Christendom, to make a vigorous opposition to his claim of supremacy?

However, it is not more certain that they were once the most flourishing Churches in Christendom, than that when they were so, they did not acknowledge this union to the Bishop of Rome as the head of the catholic Church; nay, that they opposed the beginnings and preparations to so unjust a claim; and therefore their denying it at present can with no reason be alleged as the cause of their distress.

One thing more we have to say to this doughty argument, that if it may be trusted, how comes it to pass that we have a contrary experience in Churches nearer home, which have not fallen into decay by separating from the Pope? We are apt to think, that from the Reformation to this day, there have been as many persons eminent both for piety and learning in the Church of England as any age ever produced in any nation. That we are not sunk into gross ignorance, our adversaries know by some experience. And we may say, without need of blushing for the matter, that they have felt some learning from this Church, which their union to the Pope hath of late helped very few of them to.

And if we may conclude any thing from the examples of those within their own communion, we shall find that the more closely any of them are united to this supposed head, their



piety and learning does not flourish one jot the more for it. Let the learning of the Gallican Church be compared with that of Spain or Italy; let the piety of the regulars, especially of the Jesuits, be weighed with that of the secular clergy, and I believe it will appear that this union is no such excellent advantage either towards piety or learning, that they should appeal to experience to shew the necessity thereof either to the one or the other. And thus much for their union to the Pope.

2. Neither is the union which they pretend to among themselves, as members, any certain note of the Church.

The Cardinal was not content to describe their union by "thinking the same concerning all doctrines of faith;" but will have it to exclude also discord and dissension, and falling into sects and parties. For since he denies such union to be found amongst pagans and heretics, he must be supposed to affirm it of the members of his Church, if he talks to any purpose. Now admitting it were so :

1. This is no more than what any society may have as well as the true Church; and any other Church as well as the Roman. The members of every Church are thus far united, that they all agree in professing the common belief of the society to which they belong. But about other doctrines they either fall into dissension, or not, as it happens. And for some considerable time they may agree very well, and at length fall out. In which case, according to Bellarmine's note, they would be the true Church while they agreed, whatever their faith should be, which is most absurd. It is not whether men are united among themselves in what they believe, but whether that wherein they are united be the right faith, that is to be considered. Union in a false way is a confederacy in error; and the more that men are united in it the more wise or prudent they may shew themselves to be, but never the more orthodox. And though the Cardinal produces that saying of our Saviour, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation,"\* to shew that discord is a sign of the kingdom of the devil; yet he has manifestly perverted the place, inasmuch as our Saviour's discourse there proceeds upon the contrary supposition, *viz.* that Satan is not divided against himself.

2. As there may be this union out of the true Church, so it may not be within it: which makes it plain that this is no certain note of the Church. It is undeniable that there were

\* Matth. xii. 25.

divisions in the first apostolical Churches ; and consequently, that to be members of the catholic Church, it is sufficient that in those things wherein the unity of the faith consists, all speak the same thing.

And if the Cardinal meant that the breaking of a Church into parties, and the rise of heresies and schisms out of it, is a certain note of a false Church, he might as well have said that there never was a true Church in the world, no not in the Apostles' times. And if for this reason he would unchurch the Protestants, he did in effect put as good an argument, as this against the Reformation, into the mouth of a Turk or a Jew against Christianity, that there is no truth in it at all ; and because Christians are so divided against one another, therefore none of them are in the right. For a more particular consideration of this argument, I refer the reader to the Apologetical Vindication of the Church of England.

Thus much for the first part of this discourse, which was to shew that the unity here offered is not a note of the Church. I proceed to shew,

II. *That if it were, yet the Roman Church has it not.* Which is probably true of the first, and most certainly true of the second branch of the Cardinal's unity.

1. It is probable that the Roman Church wants the first ; and that there is now no true Pope, nor has been for many ages, for that Church to be united to. For by their own confession, a Pope simoniacally chosen, a Pope intruded by violence, a heretic, and therefore sure an atheist or an infidel, is no true Pope. And many such there have been of one sort or other, whose acts therefore in creating cardinals, &c. being invalid, it is exceeding probable that the whole succession has upon this account failed long ago. Besides, there have been about twenty-five schisms in the Church of Rome, the last of which continued no less than fifty years, wherein two and sometimes three Popes pretended to St. Peter's chair, created cardinals, had their several parties and abettors, &c. During which schisms, it would be a madness to say that the Roman Church was united to the Pope as head, when they were all together by the ears which of the anti-Popes was the true one ? Now, while there was no certain Pope, there could be no certainty of the validity of any acts necessary to continue a succession of true Popes. But this case having happened so often, and sometimes continued for many years, the uncertainty must have at last grown into an utter improbability that they

have a Pope, and therefore (according to the Cardinal) that they are a Church; unless it be all one whether the Church be united with a nominal Pope or a real Pope, with a true head or a false head, or any head whatsoever. But,

2. It is undoubtedly true, that the Roman Church has not the second branch of unity, *viz.* that union of the members to one another, which the Cardinal pretends. Whether by it he means an union in all points of doctrine of great consequence, amongst those who remain in the communion of his pretended catholic Church; or such an union of their members as shall prevent the breaking away of some from the communion of the rest.

She has not the former unity. For if philosophers, heretics, &c. have had their sects and parties, and been at great dissensions among themselves, so have the members of the Roman Church too.

He pretends that all the sacred writers of their Church do wonderfully agree. Now, to let pass his presumption, in supposing that the ancient doctors of the Church to be one part of these their writers, we will for the present admit it, and only ask, if they agreed so wonderfully with the Fathers, what need there was of an *Index Expurgatorius* upon the Fathers, to make them and the Fathers of Trent agree something better?

He pretends that the decrees of their lawful Councils agree in all doctrines.\* Just so the Councils of Constance and Basil decreeing, that all power, even the Papal, was, in things appertaining to religion, to be subject to the Council; agreed with the abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction, by the Lateran Council under Leo X., by which the Council is made to truckle to the Pope. As to which, and other instances of the like sort, no help is to be had from that qualification of lawful Councils; since what the Jesuits will not own to be a lawful Council, is by other parties in that Church owned to be so. And that Church must needs be at wonderful unity within itself, that cannot so much as agree what Councils are lawful and what are not. And yet if they were so agreed, their Church unity is not to be bragged of, when there are enough amongst them to make an unlawful Council, and to determine otherwise in a point of so vast consequence, as that above mentioned, than they ought to do. For if in the same communion, one Council

\* In omnibus dogmatibus inter se conveniunt. [vol. 2. p. 116. col. 2. Prag. 1721.]

determines one way, and another the contrary way, that communion cannot be said to agree ever the more, for one being a lawful and the other an unlawful Council.

Whereas he pretends that the decrees of Popes are also at unity with one another, one would expect that in the next place fire and water should be brought in for an example of agreement too: for they may be made to agree as soon as the decrees of many Popes. Leo\* and Gelasius condemned receiving in one kind; have there been no Popes since that condemned the contrary? Nicholas IV.† determined that Christ was a beggar, and had right to nothing, but John XXII. comes not long after him, and makes it heretical so to say. It has been so frequent a practice for Popes to overthrow the decrees of their predecessors, that it were endless to recount the particulars.

As for the writers which they may justly claim to themselves; how Bellarmine should come to fancy such a wonderful agreement, is very strange, who in his own controversies has observed so many notable differences amongst them. Was it not Bellarmine that observed several catholic writers to have agreed with the heretics‡ in asserting the Council to be above the Pope? And that as those did not agree with themselves, so neither did the other side of canonists and schoolmen that asserted the contrary? And this is no trifling question neither. Such disagreement is noted by the same Cardinal upon other material points, *viz.* concerning the Pope's temporal power: whether vows of single life are dispensable? what worship may be given to images? whether images of God may be made or not? whether extreme unction, and other of their sacraments were instituted by Christ? whether intention be necessary to a sacrament? whether an express purpose of forsaking sin be necessary to contrition? whether good works be truly meritorious? And concerning many more questions, in most of which some or other of themselves have held as Protestants do, against the rest of the Church.

Not to insist upon the disputes between the Thomists, the Scotists, and the Occamists, which were not all about trifles, the question between the Dominicans and Franciscans, about the conception of the Virgin, was by themselves esteemed of

\* De Consecr. Dist. 2. cap. 12. [Corp. Jur. Can. vol. 1. p. 1918. Lugd. 1671.]

† Extravag. Joh. Tit. 14. cap. 4.

‡ De Concil. lib. 2. cap. 14. [ut supra, p. 54. col. 1.] et alibi.



such consequence, that there have been revelations about it against revelations, and if we will believe them miracles against miracles. To which we may add, the flaming contentions between the Jansenists and the Molinists;\* both which grew to such a height, that it has been all along almost as dangerous to the interest of the Roman Church to let them go on, as to go about to decide them. I confess the divinity of the New Methodists, the French Expositor, and the English Representer, has as yet occasioned but little disturbance in that communion, for which I know a good reason. But this I will say, that if their new Popery can in all points be received with the old,† I do not see but from this time forward their unity may be inviolable, now that they have got the knack of making contradictions agree with one another.

But to all such instances as these, Bellarmine hath supplied them with a ready answer: "that they differ not in those things which belong to faith." Upon which cautious answer, one would be apt to inquire, how nearly a question in religion must be allied to the faith, before it may be said to belong to it.

The Cardinal himself tells us now and then, of something held by catholics that is *fere hæreticum*, as he calls it, almost heretical, in which case the question should be also almost of faith, and may be said to belong to it. But if he means simply that they all agree in matters of faith, as he says afterwards, and that all catholics say the same thing about doctrines of faith, as we were told before, we are willing to hear him. But then we expect that the Church of England, the Lutherans, and the Calvinists, should be heard too, when to the Papists charging them with some differences, they make the same answer, that they have all the same faith, especially since when they come to prove the truth of what they say, they will shew that the matters wherein they differ do not break the unity of the catholic faith; which is something a better argument than the Cardinal produces for the unity of his party in matters of faith, *viz.* "That they all profess to believe that which shall be judged necessary to be believed in the Roman Catholic Church." For to say no more to this at pre-

\* See *Veteres Vindicat.* c. 10

† See *Defence of the Exp. of the Doctrine of the Church of England*, p. 90.

sent, notwithstanding this profession, we are very sure that some of them take those things to be matters of faith which others do not, if we may believe them; of which the infallibility of the Pope, and the deposing doctrine, are notorious and undeniable instances.

But now, if by the union of the members should be meant such a union as will hinder the separation of some from the rest, then this note must not by any means be pretended to in the Church of Rome, from which so many Churches that once were in communion with her, have broken away. Indeed, he does not expressly say that he means this by the union of the members among themselves; but some such thing he must mean, or else by virtue of this note he does impertinently run down the Lutherans as being heretics, because they have begotten so many sects, which, as he pretends, charge each other with heresy. And then it may as truly be said that the Church of Rome, in whose communion we were before the Reformation, wants the mark of unity, because so many have broken away from her; as that any other Churches want it, because some have also divided from them. For it is very idle to say, that though we were members of that Church when we first began to differ from it, yet that by our divisions we cut ourselves from her communion, and therefore that the unity of her communion is not affected by our departure. For thus we may as well excuse all the separations from ours, or from any other Church, *viz.* that by separating from us, they no longer belong to us. We are very confident, that in all points of doctrine of any moment, we of the Church of England do agree much more together than those of the Church of Rome; and as for them who have gone out from us, they as little break the unity of the rest whom they are gone from, as Luther's departing from the Church of Rome broke the unity of those who still remained in it. So that either the Church of Rome must renounce her pretence to unity upon this account, that sects and parties have not broken away from her, or she must set up this wise note of the true Church, that all her members are united, except those that are divided from her, which is a mark that will fit any society in the world.

But the Cardinal does here offer a difference between the division of heretics from the Church, and a division from heresy: "That in their Church they have a certain rule for ending controversies, *viz.* the sentence of the chief pastor, or the defi-

nition of a General Council ; and therefore dissension does not arise among them from the doctrine of the Church, but from the malice of the devil."

Now in answer to this, not to be importunate with that question, That if these be the ways of compounding controversies, how comes it to pass that their controversies still remain ? I would know,

(1.) Why were not these the means of composing those controversies that carried us away from them ? Our fathers were once of their communion, and those means were not sufficient to retain them in it. To say this "arose from the malice of the devil," is to say in effect "that the devil was in them ;" which is a little too magisterial for a controvertist, though he were a cardinal. Unless he resolves to ascribe it to the devil, that they were taken off from an implicit faith and a blind obedience to the Church of Rome: for it seems to be some people's opinion, when men begin to judge a little for themselves, the spirit of heresy comes in, and then away they go. But from hence I gather, that the sentence of the Pope, or of a plenary Council, is no certain rule for ending controversies, nor certain means of preventing divisions ; if some other means be not used to keep men "from trying the spirits," and "proving all things." What they are, the Cardinal knew very well, but mentioned them not, nor shall I need to do it. In the mean time, when whole countries went off from that Church as soon as they had a little considered what they had believed upon her authority, I need not say, whether the separation was caused by the doctrine of that Church, or by the malice of the devil, but leave the world to judge. But,

(2.) How could those be certain means of composing controversies, concerning which even in their own Church there were the greatest controversies of all ? What deference is to be given to the sentence of their chief pastor, has always been a great dispute amongst them, and the best, if not the greatest part of their Church, do not think him infallible. Nor is it yet agreed what is requisite to make the sentence of a General Council decisive, nor of those Councils that have contradicted one another, which they are to follow. And that cannot be a certain rule for deciding controversies, which is itself controverted. So that they have neither that union of members among themselves, nor those certain means of union which they pretend to have.

Which I shall farther shew from a learned writer of their

own, the famous Launoy,\* who in an elaborate Epistle to Nic. Gatinæus, wholly overthrows the pretence in question. For whether or no there be such an union in the Church of Rome as will serve the Cardinal's turn, I will leave the reader to judge, by this short and faithful account of that Epistle.

First then, he proves unanswerably, by numerous and apposite testimonies of every age, that from the Apostles' times till the Council of Trent, the constant universal doctrine concerning the Church was this, that it is "the society of the faithful," without ever inserting into the definition of it any thing relating to its being united to the Pope, or any other bishop, as to a visible head.

Nay, secondly, That all the most learned lovers of antiquity,† and godly opposers of novelty in the Roman communion, both in the time of the Council of Trent, and ever since, have retained that notion of the Church, and stuck to the ancient definition.

And, thirdly, That Canisius and Bellarmine‡ have egregiously innovated in their doctrine, by adding to the ancient definition such things as are repugnant to all antiquity, and meanwhile that they opposed each other: Canisius making it of the nature of the Church to be under a monarch,§ and giving no place in his definition of it to other governors, to whom the Church also is to be united: whereas Bellarmine makes an aristocracy, wherein one is chief, at least a tempered and limited monarchy,|| essential to the Church; going in this matter against antiquity, against Canisius, and against himself, in that he elsewhere makes antiquity a note of the true Church, and says, "It is a demonstration of the novelty of a doctrine, when the first authors can be named and pointed to;" which is his own case and Canisius's, as to this doctrine.

He reflects upon both of them, for ill logic¶ in these definitions, and shews how they destroy each other. He censures the followers of Canisius sharply and judiciously, and then remarks, that though Bellarmine have greater authority among divines, yet Canisius's definition is more generally received; and that for four reasons: "because there is more court flattery

\* Ep. par. 8. p. 353.

† [Ibid.] P. 400, 415.

‡ [Ibid.] P. 415, 419.

§ Uno et summo post Christum capite.

|| . . . . Esse cætum hominum, &c. colligatum, sub regimine legitimorum pastorum, ac præcipue unius Christi in terris Vicarii Romani Pontificis. De Eccl. l. 3. c. 2. [ut supra, p. 65, col. 1.]

¶ [Ibid.] P. 418, 419, 420.



in it; because it is put into catechisms, which the other is not, and so sticks by virtue of an early impression; because some men are mad upon novelties:" and lastly, "others insufferably ignorant as to the Holy Scriptures, and (ancient) tradition, the principles of true theology."

Fourthly, He thinks they have done harm to the Church, and that for these reasons: 1. Because, for want of logic,\* they have confounded the nature of the Church with the state of it. 2. They have neglected St. Paul's direction, of not being tossed to and fro, &c. 3. Are condemned by Tertullian, who bids us adhere to what is first. And 4. By Vincentius Lirinensis. And 5. Have given ill example, by which the Reformers can justify themselves. And lastly, Have plainly condemned several Popes, and the whole Lateran Council under Innocent III. as not sufficiently knowing what the Church was, since their notion of it could not content those which came after them: a great injury, and of dangerous consequence.

Lastly, Upon a comparison of one with the other, and of both with the ancient doctrine and discipline of the Church;† he looks upon Bellarmine's definition as the better of the two, because it may be so modified by the help of the word *præcipue* [chiefly] which is in it, as to admit of a tolerable reconciliation with the definition of the ancients; which, as he shews, can no way agree with that of Canisius.

And upon the whole he concludes, that however Bellarmine's‡ might be preferable, if either of them were necessary, yet it will be hard for Catholics to make their complaints of innovating, which they heap upon heretics, to appear just, so long as they themselves shall retain such a novel definition; and that if Gregory the VIIth's rule were observed, *viz.* "that nothing should be drawn into example or authority, which is contrary to the Fathers;" then even this his definition, though it had been received, yet ought to be rejected. To this purpose that "accurate writer," as he is deservedly called by F. Walsh,§ has argued to the utter confusion of the Cardinal's argument from union with the Pope as head, or of the members among themselves.

For how can that be a note of the true Church now, which never was thought to belong to the nature of it for fifteen hun-

\* [Ibid.] P. 430.

† [Ibid.] P. 450.

‡ [Ibid.] P. 432, &c.

§ Letter to Bp. of Linc. p. 319.

dred years together? and which their own “most learned lovers of antiquity,” and “pious opposers of novelty,” do not think essential to it at this day.

And where is the so much boasted consent of the members amongst themselves, in all matters of faith?

“I believe the holy catholic Church,” is an article of faith. I would know of those gentlemen who are at such perfect agreement amongst themselves, what this Church is? Bellarmine answers one thing, Canisius another; so contrary, that if one speaks true, the other must needs have told me that which is false. And while the definition of the former is followed by some, and that of the latter, which is worse, is more generally received, Launoy and many more of the most learned sort stick to the ancients, who are as different from both as they are from one another. And yet after all we must be told, that they are perfectly agreed in all matters of faith; and that this invisible unintelligible union shews plainly that the Roman is the true Church. One would hardly think that they are in earnest; unless by union they mean an equal resolution to carry on the dispute as long as they can contend, and no longer: which kind of union is to be met with almost every term in Westminster-hall; where one may see two parties prosecuting one another with all imaginable vigour, who yet resolve to be quiet when the Bench has made them so. Not that the party who is cast in the suit must needs change his opinion of his own cause, because the last verdict was against him: but that, if a new trial will not be granted, he is bound to acquiesce in the judgment of the court, because it has a sheriff, with the *posse comitatus*, to put it into execution. Thus they that make the sentence of the Pope, and they that make the sentence of the Council, the sentence of the Church, are united in a resolution to stand to the arbitrement of the Church; there being a certain sensible obligation upon them to profess that they will acquiesce in its determination: but in the meantime they may undoubtedly quarrel amongst themselves, about questions of such mighty importance as that we mentioned even now, and this without breach of union amongst themselves, till the sentence of the Pope, or the sentence of a plenary Council, or the sentence of both, comes to part them: which yet will be long enough first, if each side of the question be abetted with numerous and able parties, that are at present both of them resolved to submit absolutely to the Church; lest one of them, upon an unseasonable sentence, should be

provoked to change its resolution, And thus, as we observed before, the question about the “immaculate conception” has been left undecided so long, lest by determining that, a more dangerous question should be raised by the disobliged party. But if it should so happen that the Church cannot well avoid declaring herself in such a case, this new-fashioned union goes forward still, though she speaks so ambiguously, that each party fancies the sentence to be on its own side; which was done often at Trent with great application and art: particularly in the decrees concerning grace, and assurance of being justified, &c. Which being finished, Soto and Vega differed not only as much, but something more than they did at first; for now they had a new question to debate, *viz.* “on which side the Council had decreed;” and so they fell to writing great books upon it, against one another: but for all this they were admirably agreed, because they agreed in submission to the Council. I proceed to shew,

III. *That that Unity, which is indeed a note of the Church, we have, and that in a much greater degree than they.*

Which point will, I hope, yield some discourse, that will be more useful than barely to discover mistakes and expose sophistry. For here I shall represent, as well as I can, the true grounds and notions of Church unity, and then see who has most reason to pretend to it, they or we.

1. There is the unity of submitting to one Head, our Lord Jesus Christ; which is the foundation of all other Christian unity, and therefore mentioned by St. Paul, amongst the principal reasons why the Church is “one body, one Lord.”\*

2. There is the unity of professing the common faith, that was “once delivered to the saints,” which is grounded upon the authority of the Scriptures, and summarily expounded in the ancient creeds. And therefore to “one Lord,” the Apostle, in the fore-mentioned place, adds “one faith.”

3. There is an unity of sacraments in the Church, “one baptism;” by which we are all admitted into the same state of duties and of privileges, undertaking the conditions of the new covenant, and gaining a right to the promises thereof. Thus saith St. Paul, “By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body:”† and the like unity is inferred from the other sacraments. “We being many are one bread, and one body,

\* Eph. iv. 5.

† 1 Cor. xii. 13.

for we are all partakers of that one bread.”\* And again, “We are all made to drink into one Spirit.”

4. There is also an unity of obedience to all the institutions and laws of Christ, which is an instance of unity that ought by no means to be forgotten; this being no less a common duty than the profession of the faith, the performance whereof uniteth us effectually to him as to our Head, and maketh us living members of his body.

5. There is the unity of Christian affection and brotherly kindness, of which our Lord spake when he said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.” Thus St. Paul, “The members should have the same care one of another,”† &c.

6. There is an unity of discipline and government; which is maintained chiefly by retaining for substance the same form that was left in the Church by the Apostles, by the bishops and pastors confederating together, as much as may be, for the edification of their flocks; by regarding every regular act of authority in one Church, as the act of the whole, and giving no occasion to breach of Christian communion, by abusing a lawful, or by claiming an undue authority, &c.

7. There is likewise an unity of communion in the service and worship of God, in “glorifying God with one mouth,” in joining in the same religious assemblies, for prayer and sacraments, for acts of common piety and devotion, according to the rules of the Gospel. I need not mention any more instances of Christian unity, since those that are more particular may be easily deduced from these.

Now to speak clearly, there ought to be all these kinds and instances of unity in the Church; but we see evidently they are not all there, I mean in every part and member of the Church. And therefore they are not all necessary to the being of a Church, how necessary soever they may be, whether to the well being of it, or to the salvation of those persons whereof the Church consists. But some of them are necessary to the being of the Church; and they are the acknowledgment of the “one Lord,” the profession of the “one faith,” and admission into the state of Christian duties and privileges by “one baptism.” And this is all that I can find absolutely necessary to the being of a Church, inasmuch as the Apostle says, that “we are all baptized into one body.” And therefore so far as

\* 1 Cor. x. 17.

† 1 Cor. xii.



unity in these things is spread and obtains in the world, so far and no farther is the body of the Church propagated, because it is one by this unity. But then indeed there ought to be a farther unity, an unity of observing all the institutions of our Lord Jesus, an unity of Christian charity and goodwill, an unity of government and discipline, an unity of communion in religious assemblies; to which I will add also, that there ought to be an unity of care, to keep out of the communion of Christians all dangerous errors and unlawful practices. And when such begin to appear, much more if they have taken root and are grown to scandal, to root them out again. But unity in these things does not run through the whole Church, or through that body which is one in the three former respects; and therefore it must necessarily be granted, that the Church is not "one body" in these latter respects, though it ought to be so.

But because these are proper instances of Church unity, though not absolutely necessary to the being of the Church, therefore it cannot be denied that those particular Churches which keep unity in these respects better than others do, have the mark of ecclesiastical unity in a higher degree than those others, inasmuch as they have not only that unity which is a mark of a true Church, but that also which is the mark of a pure Church: and are not only one body in those things, without which they could not be parts of the catholic Church, but one also in those things wherein all other parts of the Church ought to be one with them.

We therefore, according to truth, allow the Church of Rome to be a part of the catholic Church, because she holds that "one Lord," that "one faith," that "one baptism," which we hold, and without which there were no Church at all: and thus far she maintains catholic unity.

But inasmuch as she hath violated the institution of our Lord Jesus concerning the other sacrament, as in other respects, so by withholding the cup from the people, notwithstanding he said, "Drink ye all of this," and that the Apostle said, "We are all made to drink into one Spirit," even all that belong to the body of Christ; she has departed from catholic unity, the unity of obedience.

Because she will not be content to be a sister, but claims to be the mother and mistress of all other Christian Churches, and advanced her Bishop to be head and monarch of the whole Church, and will have communion with no other Chris-

tian society but such as will be content to become her subjects, and will allow no act of ecclesiastical authority to be valid, but in a state of dependence upon her, she has therefore departed from the catholic unity of government and discipline.

Because she has brought the sacrifice of the mass, transubstantiation, purgatory, invocation of saints, &c. into her creed, and practices suitable to such false doctrines into her worship, she has departed from that purity of professing the faith, &c. in which all Churches should be one.

And because she will have no communion with us but upon these terms, which are impossible, she has departed from the unity of catholic communion.

Finally, because she has pursued all Christians that dare to open their mouths against these innovations, with anathemas, &c. and sacrificed the lives of innumerable Christians to her resentments, she has departed from the unity of catholic charity.

With these things the Church of England cannot be charged, nor with any such things as these, not truly and justly, I am sure. In her worship and administration of the sacraments, she transgresseth not the institutions of the Lord; in her government she encroacheth not upon the liberty of other Churches; to her creed she hath added no novelties; to her communion she hath annexed no unlawful conditions; she doth not unchurch those parts of Christendom that "hold the unity of the faith," no not that Church itself, the Church of Rome, which has added thereunto so many enormous innovations: she hath not embroiled the world; nor wasted countries with violence. Upon such accounts as these, she hath the mark of Christian unity incomparably more than the other Church.

From such distinct notions of unity as I have laid down, it is evident that nothing can be more idle than to seek for a Church by that mark of unity which the Cardinal lays down, which comes to no more than this, that men be all of a mind, that there be no divisions among them, &c., since it is not merely unity that is a mark of the true Church, but unity in the true faith; nor is unity the mark of a pure Church, unless it be upon terms of obedience to God, of charity to one another, of keeping the faith unmixed with errors and innovations, and the worship of God free from material defects and forbidden practices.

From hence also the folly of that conceit may be easily

discerned, that in this divided state of Christendom, there must be one Church which is the only Church of Christ, exclusively to all the rest that are not in communion with her : which is as much as to say, "That because there is not that unity amongst Christians which there ought to be, therefore there is none at all ; and because they are not united in one communion, therefore they are not united in one Lord, one faith, one baptism." That fond principle now mentioned, is advanced by the Romanists for the sake of this inference : that because we grant the Church to be one, and withal acknowledge them to be a true Church, therefore we being divided from them can be no true Church ourselves : that is to say, because we acknowledge that they have that one faith, in which all that are united belong to the Church, therefore we are out of the Church ourselves who have the unity of that faith too, and moreover the unity of observing all the institutions of Christ, and the unity of catholic terms of communion, &c. which they have not.

If some part of the Church give just cause of offence, or if another takes offence where none is given, this is indeed contrary to the duty of the members of the Church, but not utterly inconsistent with their being members of it. And if St. Paul was in the right when he said, "If the foot shall say, because I am not the head, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?" It will be also true, that though the foot should say to the hand, "Thou art not of the body, because thou art not the foot," the hand would be of the body for all that.

As for the unity of communion which they boast so much of in the Church of Rome, I say it is an unity of communion among themselves, but it is not the catholic unity of communion, because the terms of it are many of them unjust and unlawful, whereas we of the Church of England, having as much unity of communion among ourselves as they, have this also to say, as we have abundantly shewn, that the terms of our communion are every one of them just and lawful, and therefore ours is a catholic unity. If there are some Protestants that will not communicate with us, it is no more our fault than that the Papists refuse to do so. And though in point of interest this tends to weaken, yet in controversy it cannot prejudice the common cause of reformation. That part of the West that has left the Church of Rome, may labour under discords, that affect their very communion, while she

herself does not, and yet in the cause against her they may be all in the right. Where truth is maintained against a corrupt Church, there may yet be disobedience to authority, over-valuing questions of no great moment, a greater stress laid upon opinions and practices than the cause will bear, and this shall be sufficient to break Christian communion. And at the same time gross errors may be maintained, and with one consent imposed upon the world by the other Church, and all the while the differences, how weighty soever that happen by the bye, may be so overruled by force and power, and the sensible interests of this world, that they shall not affect their communion with one another. But for the reasons already laid down, it were a fond thing to choose a Church by the mark of such unity.

In short, if we would in all respects keep within the unity of the Church, this must be done by professing true doctrine, by leading good lives, by a charitable spirit and behaviour towards all Christians, by frequenting prayers and sacraments, and by submitting to the authority of our lawful guides in all things of indifference and expedience: and then we may be sure, that, whatever others do, "we keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And though the Church after all is not that one body in all respects which it ought to be, and which it would be if all men did their duty, yet that we ourselves are such members of that one body as we ought to be, and as all others ought to be likewise. Now all this unity we may keep in the communion of the Church of England, but we cannot keep it all in the communion of the Roman Church, as the terms thereof now stand. But if this unity be not enough, when once the Romanists can prove that union to the Pope as Head of the Church, and union to the Roman Church in all that she believes and teaches, is also necessary to our being of the Church, or even to our maintaining that unity which ought to be amongst all Christians; we will also acknowledge the Pope's supremacy, and believe as the Roman Church believes; but not till then.



THE  
EIGHTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED,  
VIZ.  
SANCTITY OF DOCTRINE.

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*Octava Nota est Sanctitas Doctrinæ.*—Bellar. de Notis Ecclesiæ,  
Lib. iv. cap. xi.

SEEING the new covenant is the charter upon which the Church of Christ is founded, and all the blessings which this covenant promises are appropriated to that sacred society; to be in communion with it is doubtless a matter of vast importance to the souls of men, and it being so, it is not to be imagined but that the blessed Jesus (the most concerned and careful friend of souls that ever was) hath been sufficiently mindful to leave such plain and easy directions behind him, how we may find his Church, and satisfy ourselves whether we are in fellowship with it or no, as that neither the learned nor unlearned may be left in the dark for resolution in such a momentous inquiry. But how much the Church of Rome hath made it her business to snarl and perplex several points of religion, which our Saviour left plain and obvious enough to all capacities is too notorious; and in nothing more than in this, how to discover and find out the true Church: in order to which her most learned doctors (and particularly Cardinal Bellarmine) have given us certain notes, by which, as they pretend, the true Church may be distinguished, by honest and diligent inquiries, from all false Churches whatsoever. But how far these notes are from performing what is promised for them, hath been sufficiently proved upon a very fair examination of the seven first of them.

I proceed therefore to the eighth, *viz.* Sanctity of Doctrine: which I doubt not to make appear, performs as little as either of the former. In order to which I shall endeavour to shew,

- I. *What the Cardinal means by Sanctity of Doctrine.*
- II. *That, according to his notion of it, Sanctity of Doctrine is no certain note of the true Church.*

III. *In what sense it is a certain note, by which any honest inquirer may distinguish a true Church from a false one.*

IV. *That neither in this, nor the Cardinal's notion of it, the true Church can be found by any honest inquirer, according to the principles of the Church of Rome.*

I. What is it that the Cardinal here means by "sanctity of doctrine?" To which, in short, I answer, that which he means by it is the profession of the true religion, both as to doctrine of faith and doctrine of manners, without any mixture of error. For so he explains himself: "The true Church is not only catholic, and apostolic, and one, but also holy, according to the Constantinopolitan Creed; but it is evident the Church is said to be holy, because its profession is holy, containing nothing false as to doctrine of faith, nothing unjust as to doctrine of manners." And a little after: "By this note," saith he, "it is evident that no Church but ours is a true Church, because there is no sect either of Pagans or philosophers, or Jews, or Turks, or heretics, which doth not contain some errors that have been exploded, and are manifestly contrary to right reason." By which it is evident, that he excludes all sorts of errors from that profession of religion, which he here sets up as a mark of the true Church. And therefore, after he had given a brief enumeration of the errors of all other sects, as well of Pagans, and Jews, and Mahometans, as of Christians, he thus concludes: "But as for our catholic Church, it teaches no error, no turpitude, nothing against reason" (no not excepting transubstantiation), "though many things above reason; therefore she alone is absolutely holy, and to her alone appertains what we say in our Creed, I believe the Holy Church." In which words he expressly points and directs us to his catholic Church, by this mark or note: "that it teaches no error, &c." By which it is evident, that "sanctity of doctrine," in the Cardinal's sense, consists in an unerring profession of the true religion, without any so much as the least intermixture of error. Now though it is certain that that is the best and purest Church, which hath the least of error and corruption in its doctrine and discipline, yet it is as certain, that that which is the best Church is not the only true Church, for the only true Church is the catholic Church, which consists of a great many particular Churches, whereof some are more and some less pure from error and corruption, and yet all of them true Churches: for all particular bodies

and societies of Christians that are true parts of the catholic Church, are true Churches, as being homogeneous parts of the catholic Church, and consequently partaking of the same common nature with it. But when we are discoursing of the notes of the true Church, that which we mean by them is, such certain marks and characters, by which an honest inquirer may distinguish such societies of Christians as are the true Churches, of which the true catholic Church consists, from such as are not; and therefore that can be no true note of the true Church, which doth not distinguish it from all false Churches, and whose contrary is consistent with the being of a true Church. I proceed therefore,

II. To shew, That sanctity of doctrine, according to Bellarmine's sense of it, that is, a pure profession of true religion, without any intermixture of error, is no true note, or mark, or character, by which any honest inquirer can certainly distinguish the true Church from all false Churches. And this, I doubt not, will evidently appear, if we consider what are the necessary properties of all true notes, by which things are to be known and distinguished; and they are these four.

1. Every true note ought to be common to all, of the same kind with the thing which it notifies.

2. It ought to be proper and peculiar to that kind of thing, of which it is a note, and not common to things of another kind.

3. It ought to be more known than the thing which it notifies.

4. It ought to be inseparable to it.

The three last of which, Bellarmine himself owns to be necessary properties of every true note, cap. 2, though the first he did not think meet to take notice of, for a reason best known to himself: if therefore this note, according to Bellarmine's sense of it, hath neither of these properties belonging to it, it can be no true note of the true Church; and that none of them do belong to it, I doubt not but I shall make it evidently appear.

1. First, Every true note ought to be common to all, of the same kind with the thing which it notifies. Thus every true note of a true man, for instance, ought to be common to all human kind; so every true note of every wise man ought to be common to all wise men; and by the same rule, every true note of the true Church ought to be common to all true Churches: for seeing the true Church is nothing else but only

a collection of all true Churches, whatsoever is a certain note of the true Church, must necessarily belong to all true Churches in the world. And indeed, since the end of our inquiry after the true Church is, that we may communicate with it; and since we can no otherwise communicate with the true Church, but by communicating with some particular Church that is a true part of it; the proper use of the notes of the true Church is to direct our inquirers, whether this or that Church be a true part of it? or, which is the same thing, whether by communicating with this or that particular Church, we do communicate with the true catholic Church? And therefore, unless the notes of the true catholic Church are such as do appertain to all true Churches, they can never give us any certain direction, in what Church we may communicate with the true catholic Church; for seeing we can communicate with the true catholic Church in none but a true Church, no note can give us any certain direction where to communicate with the catholic Church, but what directs us to a true Church; and no note can certainly direct us to a true Church, but what belongs to all true Churches. If therefore not to err in its profession, be a certain note whereby to find the true catholic Church, it must necessarily belong to all true Churches, and consequently that can be no true Church, which in any instance whatsoever errs in its profession. And indeed, seeing all the true Churches in the world are only so many similar parts of the true catholic Church, and the true catholic Church is only the whole of all those similar parts, or all true Churches together; whatsoever the catholic Church is, besides its being the whole, all the true Churches must be, of which it doth consist; and consequently, if that be unerring, these must be so also: for how is it possible that the whole, which consists of all the parts, should be unerring, unless all the parts are unerring? If, therefore, not to err in its profession, be a true note of the true Church, all true Churches must necessarily partake of it; and consequently, all those must be false Churches which profess any error; than which there is scarce any proposition in religion more notoriously false. It is true, whatsoever Church errs in any fundamental article of religion, doth thereby cease from being a true Church, because those articles are the very foundations upon which every true Church stands; and therefore when any Church removes them, or any of them, it must necessarily sink from the very being of a true Church, into a false and heretical communion: but there are many errors which do not at all



touch, or in the least affect the fundamentals of religion, and these a true Church may possibly profess, and yet maintain her foundations firm and unshaken ; and so long as a Church professes all those truths which are necessary to the being of a true Church, it is so far a true Church, though together with that it should profess contrary to some other truths, which are not necessary to the being of a true Church : for how can its professing any error, which doth not contradict any truth which is necessary to the being of a true Church, make it cease to be a true Church ? or how can that be a false Church upon the account of its profession, which professes all those truths which are necessary to the founding and constituting a true Church ? If the profession of every error in religion be sufficient to destroy the verity of a Church, then the profession of every truth must be necessary to found it ; because every true Church being founded upon truth, there is no error can destroy it, but what takes away the truth which founds it ; and, therefore, unless it be founded upon the profession of every truth, it cannot be destroyed by the profession of every error ; and consequently none can be true Churches, but such as profess every true proposition in religion ; which, being admitted, the profession of every true Church must contain almost as many articles, as itself doth contain communicants. And indeed if none can be true Churches but such as profess no errors, no two Churches whatsoever can differ in any opinion, though never so inconsiderable, but one of the two must be a false Church ; because wherever there is a difference in opinion, there must be an error on one side or other ; as for instance, there was a very early difference in opinion between the Eastern and Western Churches about the time of the celebration of Easter ; in which, if either of them were in the right, to be sure the other must be erroneous, and if neither, both : did then the erring Church continue a true Church, or no, notwithstanding its error ? If it did, then a true Church may err in its profession, and yet be a true Church still ; if it did not, then both were false Churches ; because though each believed that the other erred, yet for a great while they mutually owned each other for true Churches ; in which (if every error destroys the verity of a Church) they both of them erred, and thereupon both cease to be true Churches. And if we inquire into the Church of Rome, which now pretends to be the only true Church in the world, we shall find that, in several instances, it professes now quite contrary to what it professed heretofore : vid. Note 3. p. 257. Either

therefore the profession of some errors is consistent with the being of a true Church, or the Roman Church must either have been a false Church heretofore, or be a false Church now ; and seeing the Roman Church now consists of several Churches, some of which profess contrary to one another (as particularly in that celebrated question, “ Whether the Pope be superior to a General Council, or a General Council to the Pope ? ” ) it is certain, that if either of them are in the right, there must be an erroneous profession on the one side or other. And if the Roman Church err in any of its parts, how can it be unerring in the whole ? which is nothing but all the parts together : for if she allow any Church to be a true Church, or part of the true Church, which professes any error, she errs herself (supposing an unerring profession to be a true note of the true Church), and consequently is herself a false Church ; if she doth not, then in receiving Churches which differ in their profession, she receives into her communion some that are no true Churches ; which I doubt will go as far towards the unchurching her, as the profession of most errors whatsoever. In short, therefore, if not to err in its profession in any matter, be a note of the true Church, all true Churches must necessarily partake of it, and consequently none can be true Churches, which, in any point whatsoever, profess erroneously : which, as I have proved, is utterly false ; and which, if it were true, would perhaps as much damnify the Church of Rome in the opinion of any sober and honest inquirer, as any one Church now extant in the world.

2. Secondly, Every true note ought to be proper and peculiar to that kind of things of which it is a note, and not common to things of another kind, otherwise it is impossible that it should truly distinguish the one from the other : but this note of not erring in its profession, is not peculiar to true Churches : for seeing there may be a schism without any error in faith or heresy, we must either allow schismatical societies of Christians to be true Christians (which the true Church of Rome to be sure will never admit), or that it is by no means peculiar to true Churches not to err in their faith. That which may be common to schismatical communions with the true Church, cannot be peculiar to the true Church, supposing schismatical communions not to be the true Church, or the true parts of the true Church : but the Cardinal himself owns that there have been schisms which did not err in their faith, and yet were without the true Church ; for so in

his forecited chap. 2. "There may be doctrine pure," saith he, "from all error in a false Church; for so pure schismatics, as heretofore the Luciferians and Donatists, had in the beginning very sound doctrine among them, and yet were without the true Church." Where, by the way, it is evident the good man had quite forgot, that sanctity of doctrine was hereafter to be one of his notes of the true Church; for if (as he tells us in this very chapter) the notes of the true Church are such as are proper and peculiar to it, it is plain that his memory failed him, either when he made sanctity of doctrine to be one of these notes, or when he allowed his note to be common to false Churches with the true. Seeing, therefore, there have been communities of Christians in the world, which have not erred in their faith, and yet were neither the true Church, nor any true parts of it; and seeing what hath been may be again, how is it possible for any honest inquirer after the true Church, to find any one Church in the world, to which this note of not erring is proper and peculiar? The Catholics did not err in their faith, the Donatists and Luciferians did not err in theirs; how then is it possible to discover by this note of not erring in faith, which of the three were the true Church? seeing that that can be no true note of the true Church, which is not peculiar to it, and that not erring in faith was common to them both.

3. Thirdly, Every true note ought to be more known than the thing which it notifies: for how can we know a thing by that which is as unknown to us as the thing itself? If, therefore, not to err in any point whatsoever, be a note of the true Church, the truth of every article comprised in the profession of that which is the true Church, must be more known than that it is the true Church; which, considering how very large and extensive the public professions of Churches now are, cannot be supposed, without making the true Church to be one of the darkest and obscurest things in the world. For besides that, according to the principle of the Cardinal and his Church, it is the true Church only can fully instruct a man in the truth of all those points, of which the unerring profession of the true Church consists; and therefore a man must have found the true Church, and been instructed by it, before he can be certain that those points are all true; of which more hereafter: besides which, I say, it is to be considered, that there are sundry doctrines now professed by most Churches, of which ordinary capacities can make no certain judgment. I confess,

if the public professions of the Churches now in being, were confined to the fundamental articles of religion, it were an easy matter for an ordinary inquirer to satisfy himself concerning the truth of them ; because whatsoever is fundamental, is so plainly revealed, that probity of mind, together with sound intellectuals, are the only accomplishments that are requisite to men's attainment of the knowledge of it : but seeing the generality of the public professions of Churches do, together with such doctrines as are fundamental, comprehend such as are not, yea, and sometimes such as are very remote from fundamentals ; and seeing many of these are not so plainly revealed, but that *pro* and *con* they are involved with such difficulties as have perplexed even the most learned and judicious inquirers ; to satisfy one's self fully that such professions as these, are in all points true, without the least intermixture of error, requires great sagacity as well as probity of mind : for there is scarce any one Church now extant in the world, but what professes some doctrines which in some other Churches are hotly controverted and opposed ; and seeing there are sundry Churches in the world, which in sundry points profess contrary to one another, and there are scarce any two Churches which in all points are agreed, it is certain that a great part of them must in one point or other be erroneous ; and seeing the Church of Rome doth in several articles differ from all other Churches in the world ; either she by this note must be a false Church, or there is no true Church in the world but herself. Now in the midst of such a vast multiplicity of professions, how is it possible for an ordinary inquirer to conclude with any certainty, which of them is true, and which false ? Especially considering, that as to some of the points in which they differ, there are such fair probabilities *pro* and *con*, as are sufficient to suspend any modest judgment from determining itself one way or other : and that others of them depend upon such scholastical niceties, and are defended and opposed by such subtile and metaphysical reasonings, such critical senses of texts and ambiguous accounts of ecclesiastical antiquity, as that scarce one man in a thousand is capable of making any certain judgment concerning them. If therefore, before I can conclude that this or that is a true Church, it must be more known and evident to me, that it doth not err in any point whatsoever, than that it is a true Church. Doubtless to determine which is the true Church, is one of the most obscure and difficult points in the world, and I must be a very learned and judicious divine, before I can modestly



pretend to have found it: to what a miserable uncertainty then are mankind abandoned, when it is as much as their souls are worth to be in the true Church, and yet are left to seek it by such an intricate note as this, whereby scarce one man in a thousand is capable of finding it.

4. And lastly, Every true note ought to be inseparable to the thing which it notifies; for there is nothing can notify or make known a thing, without which the thing may be what it is; and if that which is the note of it may be separated from it, it may be the very same thing which it is, though it hath not that note. If therefore this note of an unerring profession be not inseparable from the true Church, it may be the true Church, though it be not unerring in its profession. Wherefore, before I can be certain that any Church which pretends to be the true Church, is the true Church, I must be certain that this note of not erring is inseparable to it. But before I can be certain that this note is inseparable to any one Church now extant, I must be certain not only that it doth not err now (which, as I have stated above, the generality of men can never be), but also that it never hath erred, nor never will: for, as the Cardinal hath stated the matter, the thing of which we are to inquire is not “which of the Churches now extant are true Churches, or parts of the catholic Church:” but “which of them are the true catholic Church?” If we were only to inquire which of them are the true parts of the catholic Church, all that we had to do was to satisfy ourselves which of them at present have the true notes of a true part of the catholic Church; but as for particular Churches, it is agreed of all hands that they may be true parts of the catholic Church at one time, and yet not be so at another; so that as to particular Churches, all that I need to inquire is only this, “Whether at present they are true Churches?” or, which is the same thing, “Whether they have at present the true notes of true Churches?” But if I inquire, as the Cardinal doth, “Which of all the Churches now extant is the true catholic Church?” Before I can be fully resolved, I must not only be satisfied which of them is a true Church at present, but also which of them shall always continue so: because, though particular Churches may cease to be true Churches, yet the catholic Church cannot, it being founded on that promise of our Saviour, that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” And therefore, before I can be secure of any present Church that it is the true catholic, I must have some certainty not only that it hath not erred for

the time past, and that it doth not err at present, but also that it will not err for the time to come ; for seeing the true catholic Church is always to continue, if not to err in its profession be a true note of it, it must always be inseparable to it, as well for the time to come as for the time past and present. And therefore, before I can be certain of any Church now extant, that it is the only true catholic Church, by this note of an unerring profession I ought to have very good assurance that it is inseparable to it, not only for the time past and present, but also for the time to come. But that it is possible for a Church which doth not err now, and did not err heretofore, to err hereafter, the Church of Rome cannot deny ; because she allows no Church now extant not to err, but herself, and yet owns that there are many Churches now in being which once did not err, and for several ages continued untainted with error, which yet have erred since, and therefore are now no true Churches ; and therefore seeing that in the nature of the thing it is no more impossible that a Church which doth not err now may have erred heretofore, and may err again hereafter, than that a Church which errs now, may not have erred heretofore, and may not err again hereafter, I cannot conclude of any Church that because it doth not err at present, therefore it never hath erred, nor ever will. Suppose then that there were only two Churches in the world, *viz.* the Roman and Greek, and that the Roman Church at present doth not err, and the Greek doth ; I can from hence no more conclude that not erring is inseparable to the Roman Church, than that erring is inseparable to the Greek. The Roman Church doth not err now ; what then ? Neither did the Greek Church err once ; why then may not the Greek as well be the true Church, because once it did not err, as the Roman, because now it doth not ? Seeing that not to have erred heretofore, and not to err now, are only different respects of the same thing to different times, and that the not erring at one time doth no more notify the true Church than the not erring at another : it is not therefore sufficient to notify either to be the true Church, that this note belonged to it at such or such a time, whether it be the time past or the time present, seeing one time or other it hath belonged to them both ; but that of the two must be the true Church to which it always belonged, and from which it was never separated. But before I can pretend to be certain that it always belonged to the Church of Rome, I must have perused the histories of the

Church through all times past to the present moment : but alas ! those histories, as the learned of all sides confess, are some of them so short and imperfect, others so partial and insincere, and others so repugnant and contradictory to one another, that supposing there were some Church now in being that never erred, and that Church were the Roman, it is next to impossible for me to be certain of it ; for even in the histories of the Church of Rome, which pretends to be the only unerring Church, there are so many (at least seeming) contradictions of one Pope and General Council to another, that it is impossible for any man, who is not prepossessed with a strong opinion of her infallibility, to pronounce with any degree of certainty, that she never erred. And methinks it is something hard that I must seek the true Church by such a note, whereby it will be impossible for me to find it, without spending a great part of my life in laborious researches of ecclesiastical history ; wherein after all, in seeking after a Church that never erred, I doubt I shall but seek for a needle in a bottle of hay.

But suppose I were so far satisfied of the Roman Church as to believe that it neither hath erred for the time past, nor doth err at the present. Before I can be certain that this note is inseparable to her, I must have very good assurance that she will not err for the time to come ; and by what argument can you assure me of that ? Why, hath not our Saviour promised that “ the gates of hell shall never prevail against his true Church ? ” And doth not this necessarily imply that his true Church shall never err ? Suppose it doth, you ought to consider that I am now inquiring whether the Roman Church be the true Church or no ? and consequently, whether this promise belongs to her, or no ? and therefore as yet, neither this, nor any other promise can be a sufficient evidence to me, that this note of not erring is inseparable to her for the future. The Church of Rome cannot deny but that there are several Churches now extant in the world, which for several ages did not err, and yet now are erroneous ; and therefore supposing that she hath not erred for these sixteen hundred years past, how can I thence conclude that she will not err hereafter ? when she herself owns that there are Churches now in being, which for eight or nine hundred years did not err, and yet have erred ever since ? And what reason can you give why it should be more impossible for a Church to err after sixteen hundred years profession of the truth, than after nine hundred ? Wherefore, before I can be certain that this note of not erring is inseparable to any one

Church now in being, I must have very good assurance, not only that she doth not err at present, nor ever did, but also that she never will. But before I can be certain that she neither doth err, nor ever did, I must be next to infallible myself; and before I can be certain that she never will, I must be certain that she is infallible, because if her not erring for the future be a contingency that may or may not be, I can never be certain whether it will be or no. But it is impossible I should be sure that she is an infallible Church before I am sure that she is the true Church, because if infallibility be granted to any Church, it is agreed of all sides, that it is only to the true Church: and therefore I must be certain which is the true Church before I can be ascertained which Church is infallible. Seeing, therefore, that every true note is inseparable to the thing which it notifies; before I can be certain that I have found the true Church which Christ hath promised to continue to the end of the world, by this note of not erring, I must have very good assurance not only that my Church doth not err at present, but also that not to err is always inseparable to it, both for the time past and the time to come: seeing therefore there is no one Church now in being of which we can be rationally assured as to this matter, the necessary consequence is, that by this note no man can certainly discover which is the true Church. And now having proved that, according to the true properties of the notes of the true Church, this of "sanctity of doctrine," as Bellarmine explains it, is no true note for an honest inquirer to seek the true Church by, I proceed,

III. To inquire, In what sense this is a true note of the true Church. In short, if by "sanctity of doctrine," we understand professing all the necessary and essential articles of Christian faith, and admitting all the essential parts of Christian worship and discipline, this, wherever it is, is a certain note of a true Church: for nothing can be a certain note of a true Church, but what is essential to it as a true Church: for whatsoever is accidental to it, is separable from it, and whatsoever is separable from it, it may have, or not have, and yet be a true Church; notwithstanding that therefore which doth not appertain to it, as it is a true Church, may appertain to a false Church, as well as a true: but to say that that is not a true Church, which hath all the essentials of a true Church, is a downright contradiction. If therefore we would have such notes of a true Church, as we may certainly depend upon, we must fetch them from the essence of a true Church; and con-



sequently we must first state what a true Church is, before we can be certain what are the true notes of it. Now what it is that is necessary to constitute a true Christian Church, may be easily collected, by considering what is necessary to make a true Christian; for a true Christian Church, is nothing but a society of true Christians. And seeing that Christianity consists of doctrines of faith, and laws of worship and discipline, he only is a true Christian, that owns and receives Christianity in all these parts of it; that is, who acknowledges all the essentials of true Christian faith, worship, and discipline. And consequently that must be a true Christian Church, or society of true Christians, which professes all the essential articles of Christian faith, and receives all the essential parts of Christian worship and discipline. Wherever therefore I find a religious society of men professing all the necessary doctrines of true Christian faith, worshipping the one God, through the one Mediator, communicating in the true Christian sacraments, and submitting to the true Christian discipline, duly administered by true Christian pastors and governors; there I am certain I have found a true Church, if that be a true Church which hath all the essentials that constitute a true Church. Wherefore before we can know whether this or that be a true Church, we must be rightly informed what a true Church is; and before we can state what a true Church is, we must learn what the true faith and worship and discipline is, because these are the essential ingredients of which a true Church is composed. And when we have learned what these are, by them we may certainly discover whether this or that be a true Church or no. If therefore by "sanctity of doctrine," we understand the public profession and admission of all the essentials of Christian faith, worship, and discipline, it is not only a certain note of a true Church, but the only certain note of it: because there can be no certain note of a true Church, but what is essential to it, and there is nothing essential to it, but what this note comprehends. Wherever this is, there is the entire essence of a true Church; and if there were but one Church upon earth that had it, that would be the only true Church in the world; and if there were ten thousand Churches agreeing in it, there would be ten thousand true Churches. So that whereas all other notes are separable from a true Church, and consequently may direct us to a false Church, instead of a true: this is no more separable from it,

than a true man is from the human nature : and if I had found a Church, that hath in it all the other notes of Bellarmine, excepting this, I should still be to seek for a true Church ; as on the contrary, if I had found a Church that wants all the rest but this, I should nevertheless sit down fully satisfied of its truth, and seek no further.

And thus I have given a brief account, in what sense “ sanctity of doctrine ” is a certain note of the true Church, and by this our Church is willing to be tried by any honest and ingenuous inquirer, whose business it is to seek for truth, and not for gain and preferment ; and if upon examination, he cannot find in it (as I am sure he may, if he examine fairly) all the essentials of that faith and worship and discipline which the Scripture teaches, and the primitive ages professed and embraced ; in God’s name let him seek farther abroad : but if, after he hath missed of it in the Church of England, he should happen to find it in the Church of Rome, it imports him, as much as his soul is worth, to inquire into one point more, *viz.* Whether he sought it by his reason, or by his interest. And now I proceed,

IV. and lastly, To shew, that, according to the principles of the Church of Rome, the true Church is not to be found by this note, in whichsoever of the two senses we understand it : for if, by “ sanctity of doctrine,” we mean, with Bellarmine, an unerring profession of the truth, without any the least intermixture of error, before we can be certain we have found the true Church by it, we must be very well assured concerning the profession of that Church, which we take to be the true Church, that it is in all particulars true, without any the least ingredient of error : or if, by “ sanctity of doctrine,” we only mean the profession of all the essentials of the Christian faith, worship and discipline, before we can be certain that we have found the true Church by it, we must be very well assured, not only that there are such essential principles, and what they are, but also that they are true ; for unless we certainly know that there are such principles, and what they are, we can never be certain whether any one Church in the world doth profess them or no : for how can we know whether or no a Church professes we know not what ? And unless we certainly know that these principles are true, we can never be certain whether that be a true Church that professes them ; for seeing it is the profession of the true principles of religion that makes a true

Church, it is impossible for us to know whether any Church be a true Church, till we know whether the principles it professes are true. So that before a man can be secure that he hath found the true Church by this note, he must be certain either that every thing it professes is true, or at least that the main and fundamental principles of its profession are true : neither of which he can be certain of, according to the principles of the Church of Rome. For,

First, She decries men's private judgment of discretion, as utterly insufficient to make any certain distinction of truth from falsehood, in matters of religion.

Secondly, She allows no sufficient rule, without the true Church, to guide and direct our private judgment of discretion.

Thirdly, She resolves all certainty, as to matters of faith, into the authority of the true Church.

Fourthly, She authorizes the true Church to impose upon us an absolute necessity of believing such things, as before were not necessary to be believed.

First, The Church of Rome decries men's private judgment of discretion, as utterly insufficient to make any certain distinction of truth from falsehood in matters of religion. Seeing we are to seek the true Church by notes, our certainty that we have found it, must wholly depend upon our certainty that we have found in it the notes of the true Church : but though there is no one thing in the world of which we are more concerned to be certain, than that we have found the true Church, and are in communion with it, because no less than our eternal salvation depends upon it ; yet it is only our own private judgment of discretion, that by applying the notes of the true Church, can ascertain us in this point : for while we are in quest of the true Church, we have no other way to find it, but by carrying the notes of it along with us, and by examining and judging, by our own private discretion, which Church these notes do belong to. Either our private discretion is sufficient to ascertain us in this matter, or it is not : if it be not, we can never be certain which is the true Church ; if it be, it must be sufficient to ascertain us in all other necessary points of religion : because one of the notes by which we are to seek the true Church, and that a principal one too, is "sanctity of doctrine," or an unerring profession of the true religion, at least in all necessary points. But before we can

be certain which Church this note belongs to, we must be thoroughly satisfied in our own private discretion, what this unerring profession is, which we can never be, till we are certain of the truth of all the particulars of it; and when we are certain of this, we are certain at least as to all necessary points of true religion, which must all be included in every unerring profession of it. So that before we can be certain of any Church, that it is the true Church, we must be certain that it doth not err in its profession; and before we can be certain of this, we must be certain of the truth of all those particular doctrines whereof its profession is composed; and of this we have as yet no other way to be certain, but only by our own private judgment of discretion; because till we have found the true Church, it is impossible we should conduct ourselves by its authority, and in the absence of the true Church's authority, we have nothing to conduct us but our own private discretion: either this our private discretion, therefore, is sufficient to ascertain us of the truth of all the particular doctrines, whereof an unerring profession of religion is composed, or it is not; if it be, it must be sufficient to ascertain us as to all necessary points of religion; if it be not (as the Church of Rome affirms it is not) it is impossible we should ever be certain that we have found the true Church: again, either therefore the Church of Rome must allow, that certainty in all (at least in all necessary) points of religion, is attainable by the free and honest use of our own private judgment of discretion (which, as I shall shew by and by, she can never allow, without undermining her own foundations); or she must leave men hovering in eternal uncertainty, as to one of the most necessary points of religion, *viz.* which is the true Church.

Secondly, The Church of Rome allows no sufficient rule, without the true Church, to guide and direct our private judgment of discretion. Seeing the constitution of the true Church is not natural, but entirely founded on Divine institution, this question, "Which is the true Church?" is not to be resolved by the principles of nature, but by principles of revelation; and therefore, without some revealed rule, which is every way sufficient to guide and direct our private discretion, we shall never be able to find out which is the true Church; because without such a rule we have nothing but the principles of nature to go by, which in this inquiry are utterly insufficient to direct us. But while we are out of the Church,



we have no other revealed rule to direct us in our inquiry after it, but only that of Scripture; for as for tradition, the Church of Rome teaches, that the true Church is the sole conservator of it, and that though it be a part of Divine revelation, yet no man is obliged any farther to believe it, than the true Church hath defined and declared it. And seeing I can have no certainty what is a true tradition, till such time as I am got into the true Church, how can tradition be a rule of faith to me, while I am out of it? or, how can that be the rule of my faith, whilst I am in quest of the true Church, which I have no other obligation to believe, but only the true Church's authority? Whilst therefore I am out of the true Church, the only rule I have to go by, in my inquiries after it, is Scripture: and this the Church of Rome tells me is insufficient, both because it is not full enough, and because it is not clear enough. Which, if true, I can never be certain I have found the true Church by this note of an unerring profession.

1st. She teaches that the Scripture is not full enough, as not containing in it all necessary doctrines of faith and manners; but that there are certain unwritten traditions in the Church, of equal authority with it; by which its defects are supplied. And if so, how is it possible I should find the true Church by the direction of Scripture? For since, according to this note, that can be no true Church, which doth not unerringly profess all necessary doctrines of faith and manners; when I have found a Church which professes all such necessary doctrines, as are in Scripture, I cannot be secure that it is a true Church, supposing there are other necessary doctrines out of Scripture, *viz.* in the unwritten traditions; because then the profession of these will be altogether as necessary to its being a true Church, as the profession of those. All that the Scripture can satisfy me in, is only this, whether such a Church profess all the necessary doctrines in Scripture? But if there are any necessary doctrines out of Scripture, it is certain that the profession of them is as necessary to the being of the true Church, as the profession of those that are in it. And therefore, before I can be certain that it is the true Church, I must be fully satisfied that it professeth both, which I can never be, unless I have some other rule to go by, besides this of Scripture.

2dly, The Church of Rome teaches, that the Scripture is no sufficient rule in respect of clearness, the sense of it being so obscurely expressed, that we can never be certain what it is,

without the interpretation of the true Church : which, if true, it is utterly impossible for one who is out of the true Church ever to find it by the direction of Scripture. For according to this note, that only is the true Church which doth not err in its profession, at least in any necessary point, either as to doctrines of faith, or doctrines of manners. But before I can know whether any Church doth not err in its profession, I must be certainly informed what the true profession is, or what are those doctrines of faith and manners of which this true profession consists ; as to which the Scripture can never certainly inform me, if it be not sufficiently clear. For if I can never be certain what the true sense of Scripture is, without the interpretation of the true Church, how is it possible that while I am out of the true Church, I should ever be certain of its sense, as to all the particular doctrines which the true profession of religion contains ? So that, according to this principle, the Scripture is so far from being a sufficient rule to one that is out of the true Church, that it is perfectly useless to him in his inquiry after it. For either it can certainly direct him to the true Church, or it cannot ; if it can, it must be sufficiently clear to inform him of its own sense (without the interpretation of the true Church), concerning all those doctrines of faith and manners, whereof the unerring profession of the true Church is composed ; and if so, this principle of the Roman Church is erroneous ; if it be not, to what purpose doth it serve, unless it be to lead him into an endless maze of uncertainties, wherein the farther he wanders the more he will lose himself : so that if a man hath had the misfortune to be born and bred out of the true Church, in an heretical or schismatical communion, and is inquiring his way in, by this note of an unerring profession, he hath no other rule to instruct and inform him, what his unerring profession is, but only that of Scripture ; which, according to the principles of the Church of Rome, is insufficient for his purpose. How then is it possible he should ever be certain that he hath found the true Church, when the only rule he hath, whereby to inquire what that unerring profession is, whereby he is to seek it, is utterly insufficient to resolve him ?

Thirdly, The Church of Rome resolves all certainty, as to matters of faith, into the authority of the true Church ; and indeed this is the fundamental principle of Popery, *viz.* “ That the only ground of certainty, as to matters of faith, is the authority of the present true Church, teaching and proposing

them." Till such time, therefore, as we have found the true Church, and do believe upon the authority of its teaching, we can never have any true certainty of the matters which we are to believe. And yet before we can be certain that we have found the true Church, by this note of an unerring profession, we must have very good certainty as to all matters of faith; for we can never be certain upon the authority of any Church, that what we believe is true, till such time as we are certain that it is the true Church; nor can we ever be certain that it is the true Church, until we are certain that it doth not err in its profession; or, which is the same thing, that all the matters of faith which it teaches and professes, are true: so that the certainty of our faith, after we have found the true Church, and do believe upon its authority, must depend upon the certainty of our faith while we were seeking it, and did believe without its authority: because, before we can believe with any certainty upon the authority of any Church, we must be certain that it is the true Church; but we can never be certain that it is the true Church till we are first certain that its profession is true, as to all the matters of faith contained in it.

To make the matter more plain, I will briefly represent it in a short dialogue between a Protestant and a Papist.

*Protest.* You tell me I can never be certain, as to matters of faith, unless I believe upon the authority of the true Church.

*Pap.* I do so; and upon the truth of this proposition all my religion is founded.

*Protest.* But I beseech you, may I be certain as to matters of faith, if I believe upon the authority of any Church, though I am not certain whether it be the true Church or no?

*Pap.* To what purpose do you ask this question?

*Protest.* Because, if I may, then, in believing upon the authority of the Church of England, which you say is a false Church, I shall be as certain as to matters of faith as you who believe on the authority of the Church of Rome, which you say is the only true Church.

*Pap.* Why, then, I tell you, you can never be certain as to matters of faith, in believing upon the authority of any Church, unless you are certain it is the true Church upon whose authority you believe them.

*Protest.* Why so?

*Pap.* Because it is not the authority of a Church merely

that is the true ground of certainty, but the authority of the true Church; otherwise the authority of all Churches, true or false, would be equally a true ground of certainty: and therefore, you can never be certain that the authority of that Church, upon which you believe, is a true ground of certainty, unless you are first certain that it is the true Church.

*Protest.* I do allow your reason. But then, pray, how shall I be certain that it is the true Church?

*Pap.* Why, this you must examine by certain notes of the true Church, whereof one (and that a principal one) is sanctity of doctrine, or an unerring profession of the true religion.

*Protest.* But, good sir, can I not be certain that it is the true Church, till I am first certain that it doth not err in its profession?

*Pap.* No.

*Protest.* Why, then, I must be certain of all those matters of faith, whereof its profession consists, before I can be certain that it is the true Church.

*Pap.* You must be so.

*Protest.* But, pray, how shall I? If that be true which you told me just now, *viz.* "That there is no true ground of certainty, but the authority of the true Church:" then how is it possible I should ever be truly certain, when as yet I know no true ground of certainty?

*Pap.* Why, have you not the authority of the true Church?

*Protest.* But as yet I am not certain that the Church, upon whose authority you would have me believe, is the true Church; and till I am certain of this, with what certainty can I depend upon her authority? would you have me be certain that whatsoever she professes is true, upon her own bare word and authority, before I am certain that she is the true Church? If so, why may I not as well believe any other Church to be the true Church, seeing there is no other Church but what will pass its word for the truth of its own profession as well as your's? if not, you must allow me to have some other ground of certainty as to matters of faith besides the authority of the true Church. For before I can securely rely upon the authority of any Church as the true ground of certainty, I must be certain that is the true Church, and my certainty that she is the true Church, must depend upon my certainty of all those matters of faith comprised in her profession. So that before I am certain of the truth of her profession, it is too soon for me



to rely upon her authority as the only ground of certainty ; and when I am certain of it, it is too late, because I am certain already.

Fourthly and lastly, The Church of Rome gives authority to the true Church, to impose upon men's minds a necessity of believing such things as before they were not obliged to believe : for she makes the Church's authority not only a concurrent motive of faith, but the very formal reason of it, so that we are not only obliged to believe what the Church declares, but we are therefore obliged to believe it, because she declares it. It is true, some of the Roman doctors tell us, that the Church hath no power to make new articles of faith, but only, that seeing there are some old truths in Scripture, and the unwritten traditions of the Church, which the Church hath not yet declared, and which therefore men are not yet obliged to believe ; the Church hath authority, whenever she thinks meet, to declare them, and thereby to oblige men under pain of damnation to believe them : but others of them (and particularly Bellarmine *de Potest. sum. Pontif.*) tell us, "That the Church of later time not only hath power to explain and declare, but also to constitute and command those things which belong to faith." And indeed the difference between declaring and constituting, or making an article of faith, is only verbal : for an article of faith is a truth that is necessary to be believed : and therefore, if the Church, by declaring a truth which was not necessary to be believed, makes it necessary to be believed, it thereby makes that truth an article of faith, which was not an article of faith. And so to declare, and to make, is the very same thing. But in this they are all agreed, that the true Church hath power to make those things necessary to be believed which were not so before. And if this be true, no man can ever be certain, by this note of an unerring profession, that he hath found the true Church. For before I can be certain of any Church (as for instance the Roman), that it is the true Church, I must be certain that that Church's profession is true ; but when I proceed to examine the particular articles of it (as I must do, before I can be certain of the truth of the whole), I shall find there are several of them, of the truth of which, in the opinion of several (even of her own doctors), I have no sufficient ground to be certain, either in Scripture or tradition (which while I am seeking the true Church, are the only rule I have whereby to examine them), as particularly, Transubstantiation, Seven Sacraments,

Necessity of Auricular Confession, Roman Purgatory, and Indulgences.—*Vid.* Note 6, p. 301, &c. And if these Roman doctors pretend to be certain of them, upon no other reason but because their Church (which they are sure is the true Church) hath declared them; how shall I be certain of them, who am but an inquirer, whether it be the true Church or no? And therefore, as yet, cannot be supposed to be sure that it is; for without her declaration, they themselves confess I have no sufficient ground to be certain of the truth of them: and till I am sure she is the true Church, her declarations are no ground of certainty to me. And as I cannot be certain that these articles are true, till I am sure that the Church which declares them is the true Church; so supposing that the true Church hath power to impose upon me a necessity of believing such things, as before I was not obliged to believe, I cannot be certain that they are false, because no authority can be supposed to have a right to impose upon men such a necessity of believing, but what is infallible, and cannot impose what is false on them; unless it be supposed that men may be rightfully obliged to believe what is false. If, therefore, the Roman Church be the true Church (as for all I yet know it may), then for all I yet know it hath authority from God to impose upon me a necessity of believing whatever she declares; and consequently for all I yet know she is infallible. But as for myself, I know that I am a fallible creature, and therefore whatsoever infallibility declares to me, must certainly be true, whatsoever probabilities, yea, or seeming demonstrations I may have against it; how then can I be certain that any article is false, which is declared to me by a Church, that for all I yet know is infallible? If it be infallible, I am sure that whatever it declares is true: and if it be the true Church, it must be infallible; supposing that the true Church hath authority to impose new necessities of believing; but whether it be the true Church or no, is the thing I am now inquiring by this note of an unerring profession. But till I am certain one way or the other, whether she be the true Church or no; I can never be certain whether her profession be true or false; till I am certain that she is the true Church. There are some articles in her profession, of which (as her own doctors confess) I cannot be certain that they are true; and till I am certain that she is not the true Church, I can never be certain that any one article in her profession is false; and if I cannot be certain whether she errs in her profession or no, till I am certain whether she be

the true Church or no, to what purpose should I inquire whether or no she be the true Church, by this note of an unerring profession? If supposing her to be the true Church, she hath authority from God to oblige me upon pain of damnation to believe to-day that which I was not obliged to believe yesterday; to what end do I inquire whether those things which she commands me to believe, are true or false? If she be the true Church (as for all I yet know she may be), I am sure whatever she commands me to believe, must be true; and therefore till I am certain that she is not the true Church, I can never be certain that any thing she commands me to believe, is false: for how can I be certain that any one thing she imposes is false, when, for all I yet know, she is the true Church, which the God of truth (who can neither impose himself, nor authorize any other to impose on me that which is false) hath authorized to impose it? And if, till I am certain that she is not the true Church, I can never be certain that any thing she imposes is false; how can I ever be certain, by this note of an unerring profession, whether she be the true Church or no? For if any thing she professes or imposes be false, by this note, she cannot be the true Church; but whether any thing she professes be false or no, I can never be certain, till I am first certain whether she is or is not the true Church.

THE  
NINTH NOTE OF THE CHURCH EXAMINED,  
VIZ.  
THE EFFICACY OF THE DOCTRINE.

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*Nona Nota est Efficacia Doctrinæ.*—Bellar. de Notis Ecclesiæ,  
Lib. iv. cap. xii.

By efficacy of doctrine, must be meant, either that power which the word of God has in the minds of particular men to dispose them to believe aright, and to live well, or else that success which it has in drawing multitudes outwardly to profess and embrace it. The former of these is too inward a thing to be the note of a true Church; no man being able to know what the word of God has done in another's heart, but, instead of that, apt rather to be deceived in what it has done in his own.

The second (which must be that the Cardinal means) can as little be a note, by reason of its uncertainty; and if we cannot be sure of the note, we shall be less so of that, which we are to find out by it. If indeed there were nothing which could or did move men to relinquish heathenism, Judaism, or Turkism, for our religion, but the pure efficacy of the Christian doctrine, it would be a very good note of the excellence of the doctrine itself; but, according to the Cardinal's own principles,\* it could be no note that that were the true Church which preached it, since he will not allow the sincere preaching of truth to signify anything. And we shall have much less reason to rely on this note, if we consider how many other things there are, besides the efficacy of the Christian doctrine, which have and may convert whole nations to it.

Let us therefore at present grant in general the matter of fact to be true, that such conversions as the Cardinal speaks of

\* Lib. iv. 2. [vol. 2. p. 96, 97. Prag. 1721.]



were made by the Church of Rome, yet how shall we know that they were made purely by the efficacy of its doctrine, and that no other means, such as force, &c. were used? Is it enough that he tells us so? The Bishop of Meaux tells us that in the late great conversion in France, not one of the persons converted "suffered violence, either in his person or goods;\* that they were so far from suffering torments, that they had not so much as heard them mentioned, and that he heard other bishops affirm the same." Now if those reverend prelates were out (as most people think they were) in a matter of fact, of which they might be eye-witnesses, why may not the learned Cardinal be so too in his relation of conversions, made so many hundred years since? If he be out, his note falls to the ground; and if it cannot be made plainly to appear to us that he was not out, his note, as far as it is founded upon those histories which he produces, wants that certainty which should give us that satisfaction. Historians who wrote in those obscure times, and were perhaps themselves converts, being most of them monks, might vain gloriously ascribe much to the efficacy of their own doctrine; and the Centuriators themselves, whom he so often quotes, might not be very curious to search, or accurate to relate the chief motives of their conversions, because they wrote before the Cardinal had made "efficacy of doctrine" a note of the true Church, and little dreamt what odd use some men would make of their history. But notwithstanding their neglects and disadvantages, I do not doubt, but that if we looked back into the writers of those times, nay, even into the Centuriators themselves, we should find some other things besides efficacy of doctrine, concurring to the conversions which were then wrought. An instance whereof (to pass by at present the particular examination of those mentioned by the Cardinal) we have in those conversions wrought by Charles the Great, to whose victorious arms they were more to be ascribed than to anything else besides. For (not to mention that the clergy were not then in any great capacity of doing much by the efficacy of their doctrine, the bishops being so ignorant, that they were to be commanded to understand the Lord's Prayer, and could hardly be brought to make some few exhortations to the people, but instead of that turned soldiers, to shew that they were willing to do somewhat towards the propagating their religion) such was the zeal of

\* Pastoral Letter, p. 3, 4.

that Prince rather\* “to defend and increase the kingdom of Jesus Christ, than to enlarge his own empire; that peace could never be obtained of him upon other terms, than that those who were conquered by him, having left their idol-worship, should embrace the true, sincere, and eternal religion of Christ.”† And to engage them to continue firm to it, he sometimes took hostages of them; and finding them begin to apostatize (which they as often did as they thought themselves able to make head against their conquerors) he was forced to set up a kind of inquisition to keep them in awe, which, Mezeray tells us, lasted in Westphalia till the fifteenth century. Now when the swords of victorious princes, as it happened in this case, had made way for the preaching of the Gospel; when the receiving of it was often made one of the terms they who were conquered must necessarily submit to, the monks had very easy work, whatever doctrine they had preached, might have been efficacious under such circumstances: so that when there is with the Christian doctrine a concurrence of many other things which have so strong an influence upon human nature, it is hard, nay impossible for us to know which of them does the work. When different medicines, proper for the same distemper, are administered at the same time, it is not easy to say which of them works the cure.

There is indeed a wonderful efficacy in the Christian doctrine; but we can never be sure that the conversion of a nation is effected by that, when hopes, and fears, and outward force, and necessity are in conjunction with it.

All which is so far from detracting from the honour of our religion, and the conversions it made in the primitive times, that it sets it in a better light and makes it shine the brighter. Men were converted then, not to a conquering, but persecuted Church. The secular power was against them that preached this holy doctrine: much might be lost, and nothing in this world got by it. There were no rewards to encourage men to receive it, but a thousand difficulties and dangers to deter them from it. And then indeed the efficacy of the Christian doctrine was in its greatest lustre; it wrought all alone, and had nothing to put in with it for a share in the conquests it made: the simplicity of its preachers cleared them from all suspicion of fraud. The little or no interest they had in the government,

\* Mezeray, in the Life of Charles the Great.

† Krantzius Præf. ad Metrop.

makes it plain that they could not use force, and everything concurred to demonstrate that it was purely the efficacy of their doctrine by which they prevailed. But to proceed a little more particularly to answer what the Cardinal has discoursed upon this subject.

First, *I shall endeavour to shew in the general, that the prevalency of any doctrine can be no note of a true Church.*

Secondly, *I shall instance in such particulars, as do more particularly affect the Church of Rome in this matter, and do make it evident, that the prevalency of the doctrine professed in that Church is no note of its being a true Church.*

Thirdly, *I shall shew the insufficiency of those arguments, with which the Cardinal endeavours to prove the contrary.*

First, *That the prevalency of any doctrine can be no note of a true Church,* will appear, if we consider,

1. What our Saviour hath said in this matter.
2. The nature of mankind.
3. Matter of fact.

1. Although our Saviour sufficiently understood how much his doctrine was likely to prevail in the world, yet he is so far from making this to be a true note of his Church, that he gives us plain intimations of the prevalency of error, and does often bid us take care how we are imposed upon thereby. "Take heed," saith he,\* "that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many:† for there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect." When he foretels so general a defection, he cannot be supposed to have thought the prevalency of any doctrine to have been the character of his true disciples. He does indeed compare the preaching of his Gospel to a "grain of mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs;" unto leaven, "which leaveneth the whole lump;" unto a net, "which gathereth of every kind." All which comparisons do intimate, how much his Church would spread far and near; but not that such its diffusiveness was to be relied upon as a note whereby to find it; for by that mark it could not then have been found, when it was but a little flock.

\* Matth. xxiv. 4, 5.

† Ver. 24.

Besides that, in the same chapter,\* he compares likewise the preaching of his Gospel “to a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way; but when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.” In which case, if we were to judge by the growth and spreading, we might conclude the tares to have been the best seed, and not sown by an enemy. He compares likewise the ministers of his Word to the servants of a certain king, sent out by him to call those who were bidden to the wedding, but to no purpose,† “for they all made light of it.” Intimating hereby, how possible it is for those who are obstinate not to hearken to the most efficacious doctrine that can be preached, the most passionate and earnest invitations which can be made them. And in the parable of the good seed, some of which fell by the wayside, some upon stony places, some among thorns, and other upon good ground;‡ he does plainly set forth, that let any doctrine be never so good, the reception which it finds in the world, will be no other than what is agreeable to those dispositions of mind which it happens to meet with. And here also, if the rule had been, that that is the true doctrine which grows fastest and out-tops the other, we must have given it for the thorns, which grew up and choked the good seed. Which leads me to shew,

2. From the consideration of the temper and constitution of mankind, how weak a proof of a true Church the prevalency of any doctrine is which it teacheth. For men’s minds are so uncertain, by reason of the inconstancy of their circumstances, which chiefly influence them, that often truth is shut out, where error finds an easy admission. Human nature is so weak a thing, so apt to take impressions, first from this thing, then from another, that no great heed is to be given to its changes; no certain argument can be drawn from them. Such indeed is the power of truth, that were mankind freed from their prejudices against it; were their minds no way biassed by interest or passion, and at the same time fully instructed concerning it, there is no doubt to be made, but that it would generally obtain. But when men’s inclinations and circumstances are so various, nothing is more manifest, than

\* [Matth. xiii.] 24, 25, 26.

† Matth. xxii. 5.

‡ Matth. xiii. 3, 4.



that the receiving or rejecting truth, is a thing too uncertain to be made an infallible note of it. When it is argued on behalf of Christianity, that so many thousands were on the sudden converted to the faith: the force of such an argument does not lie in the bare prevalency of the doctrine, but in its prevalency when placed in such circumstances as it at the first preaching of the Gospel was; and when men of mean birth and education (as has already been observed) did, without force or fraud, on the sudden make so many proselytes to a religion, which was so directly contrary to those opinions to which the world had been so long accustomed, a religion which was likely to bring such great inconveniences upon those who embraced it: this indeed was very remarkable, and could be ascribed so nothing but the power of truth, which was only able to bring about so wonderful an effect. In a word, men being oftener guided by fancy, prejudice, and interest, than by reason, makes them more capable of error than of truth; and when they have once received it, not only unwilling to part with it, but zealous to propagate it as much as they can. The agreeableness of any doctrine to their wicked lusts and affections, is most likely to win upon them. The craft and cunning of those who lie in wait to deceive, may easily mislead unstable minds into gross mistakes before they are aware. Force, the enjoyment of present preferment, or the hopes of it, may make them profess what they do not believe to be true, and then seek for reasons to defend it. Since then there are so many things besides truth, which may induce men to admit any doctrine, the bare admitting of it, though never so universally, can be no note of the truth of that, or of the Church that teaches it. God has endued us with a capacity of finding out truth, but at the same time he has made us fallible creatures, and liable to be imposed upon; so that it stands us in hand to be aware how we are deceived; and the more care we take in a concern of this nature, the more we discover our own sincerity and zeal for truth. But let there be never such clear discoveries thereof, it is in our power wilfully to shut our eyes against them; nay, when we have adhered to truth for some time, we may be tempted either wholly to forsake it, or to intermingle gross errors with it. So that it is as improper to conclude the prevalency of any doctrine to be an argument of the truth of it, or of the Church that professeth it, as that any cause is just, because successful. Such is God's infinite wisdom and goodness, that

as he does oftentimes bless with unexpected success an honest and just design, and they who are sagacious in tracing the footsteps of Providence, do easily discover it; so does he likewise frequently exert his power after an extraordinary manner for the propagation of truth. But on the other hand, as he often permits an unjust design to prevail and prosper, so likewise does he suffer error to multiply and increase. And when he does at any time exert his power after an extraordinary manner for the propagation of truth, he still deals with men as with rational creatures; so that such his power may be resisted, nay, may be so far resisted, as may make him punish with infatuation such their resistance; as he served the Pharisees upon the account of their obstinacy,\* “whose eyes he blinded, and whose heart he hardened, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted.” And as happened to those whom the Apostle makes mention of,† upon whom, because “they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusion, that they might believe a lie.” Since therefore such is the temper and constitution of mankind, as to be daily subject to errors, and to be liable, by the just judgment of God, to be at last hardened in them, nothing can with any certainty be determined concerning the truth of any Church, from the prevalency of any doctrine professed in it.

3. Plain matter of fact shews the insufficiency of this note. For the histories of all ages make it evident, what an influence error had upon men’s minds; and that although truth may have happened sometimes to have prevailed, yet that it has been as often refused, and gross and most impious opinions preferred before it. How soon were our first parents,‡ when their minds were in their greatest strength and vigour, and not as yet biassed by any misapprehensions of things, by the cunning artifices of Satan tempted to believe a lie? After which first and grand mistake, how did their whole stock degenerate? when “every imagination of man’s heart being evil, it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth.”§ Afterward God chose to himself out of the rest of the world a peculiar people, and to secure them against the idolatry and superstition of those who dwelt near them, he gave them particular statutes, which, by threats and promises, and mighty wonders

\* John xii. 40.

† 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.

‡ Gen. iii. 5, 6.

§ Gen. vi. 5, 6.

which he wrought for them, he obliged them to observe. Yet how soon did they forget God, and turned after idols? So that in the time of Ahab, according to God's own account, there were but seven thousand who had not bowed unto Baal. If the efficacy of the doctrine had been a note of the true Church, I do not see why the priests of Baal had not as much reason at that time to have insisted upon it as the Romish priests can have now. At our Saviour's coming the Pharisees had infected the whole nation with their traditions, and so obstinately did they adhere to them, that notwithstanding the many miracles which our Saviour had wrought for them, notwithstanding the holiness of his life and conversation, few believed on him, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, made mention of in John xii. 38, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" of which our Saviour himself complains, John v. 43, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." And in the eleventh of Matthew, ver. 20, &c. he does most severely "upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:" and does openly declare, that it would "be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them." If any doctrine was likely to have been efficacious, one would have thought the doctrine of our Saviour, when taught by himself, had been so; and yet we find that no prophet was ever less respected than he was, even among his own countrymen. The same thing happened likewise to St. Paul, as we read, Acts xiii. 45, and Acts xxviii. 24, &c. After Christianity had for above three hundred years been struggling to get ground in the world, how strangely did Arianism on the sudden prevail against it? One would have thought, that after people had for some time been confirmed in the truth, they should not have been easily tempted to embrace so gross an error. But yet, such was the efficacy of this heresy, that, as Theodoret relates, the Emperor Constantius, in a discourse with Liberius bishop of Rome, urgeth it as an argument against his intercession on behalf of Athanasius. "Pray,"\* saith he, "how big a part of the world are you, that you alone pretend to stand up for a wicked man (so he called Athanasius) and to disturb the peace of the whole world?" Which the Bishop was so far from thinking a good argument, that he

\* Theod. lib. 2. Hist. Eccl. c. 16. [c. 13. vol. 3. p. 867. Hal. 1771.]

immediately replied, "The true faith loseth nothing by my being alone; for there were formerly but three\* who resisted the king's commandment." Neither did the same heresy prevail only at home amongst the orthodox Christians, but was likewise victorious abroad amongst the idolatrous nations, of which the same author gives us a notable instance, when he tells us, that one Ulphilas,† a bishop of great authority amongst the Goths, being corrupted by Eudoxius, persuaded the whole nation to embrace it. About three hundred years after so general a defection from the true faith by Arianism, the impostor Mahomet arose,‡ whose doctrine, in the space of one hundred years, overrun a great part both of the east and south, and did continue so far to prevail, that when Brerewood§ made the computation of such as had received it, he reckons them to be six parts of thirty (into which he supposeth the whole world to be divided), whereas he allots but five parts to the whole number of Christians, of what denomination soever. As to this particular, the Cardinal urgeth, that Mahometanism is propagated by force of arms, and not by the efficacy of its doctrine. In answer to which assertion (besides that the world is not ignorant how little reason the Cardinal had to make this objection, and that Mahomet must have first converted those by his doctrine, whom he afterwards made use of to convert others by force), I shall set down this remarkable instance, whereby it will manifestly appear, how much the Mahometan missionaries, even without the assistance of any outward force, may sometimes prove too hard for the Roman ones. Bati, king of the Tartars, having wasted the Christian territories, returns into Scythia, leaving all Europe in a great consternation. Pope Innocent IV. in the year 1246, from the Council of Lyons, sends a company of religious men a long journey to him, to exhort him to worship the one living and true God, and his only Son Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, and to abstain from shedding Christian blood. When the Tartar had heard the Pope's request, he promised for five years not to trouble the Christians.|| But as soon as the Pope's messengers were gone,

\* Dan. iii. 18.

† Theod. lib. iv. c. ult. [ut supra, p. 1014.]

‡ Paulus Æmyl. l. 2. de gestis Francor. Calvis. Chronol. ab Anno 631. ad Ann. 718.

§ Brerewood's Enquiries, c. 14. [p. 145. Lond. 1674.]

|| Laur. Surii Comment. p. 25.



some Saracens came, exhorting the Tartars to embrace the Mahometan sect rather than Christianity; and what they said had such effect, especially upon the Emperor, that they embraced Mahometanism, and keep to it still. In this case, the two doctrines had very fair play; for the Tartars were prejudiced on neither side, neither could force be made use of to compel them to receive one doctrine more than the other. If either had the advantage, it was that of the Romish Church; for that had got the start, but was soon wholly rejected; and the other has ever since been embraced.

Were not those instances which I have mentioned sufficient, to shew what little judgment can be made of the truth of any Church from the reception which its doctrine has met with in the world, I might here add the conversions wrought by those of the Greek Church, whom the Church of Rome accounts heretics. Frumentius, sent by Athanasius, converted the Indians; Moyses, an Alexandrian monk, the Saracens: and concerning the conversion of the Muscovites, Paulus Jovius thus speaks: "Above five hundred years since," says he, "the Muscovites worshipped the heathen gods, Jupiter, &c., but then were they first initiated in the Christian rites, when the Greek bishops, out of an inconstant temper, began to dissent from the Latin Church; and it so happened, that the Muscovites, in the same sense, and with a most hearty belief, followed those religious rites which they had received from their Greek teachers."\* I might likewise make mention of the great efficacy of the Reformed doctrine, which in the space of fifty years, when Bishop Jewel set out the Defence of his Apology,† notwithstanding the great opposition which had been made against it, had overrun whole nations, and mightily prevailed even in those kingdoms where the princes and governors were still Popish. The distinction which Bellarmine makes,‡ that "heretics do not convert men to the true faith;" and "that the Goths were cheated into Arianism;" "that they pervert Catholics," is nothing to the purpose: for if by heretics men may be converted or cheated into what is false; if Catholics may be so easily perverted, then the effect which any doctrine has upon men's minds, can be no note of their being members of a true Church who profess it. If the doctrine, which they who are converted have received, be a true doctrine, this

\* De Legatione Muscovit.

† Defence of Apol. p. 36.

‡ Bellar. de Not. l. 4. c. 12. [ut supra, p. 121, 122.]

indeed is a good note of a true Church, and we are willing to stand and fall by it ; but their bare conversion is no note at all, because as to its being received, or not received, error has had the same fate in the world as truth itself has had. And of this the Cardinal himself was enough sensible, who having forgot what he had made to be the ninth note of the Church, does repeat, in an oration at the end of his controversies, this objection of the Reformists : “ How is it possible,” say they, “ that that doctrine should not be from God, which in so short time has overrun so many people, provinces, and kingdoms ?” And then makes this answer, “ If it be lawful to philosophize after this manner, we shall have much more reason to wonder why the Alcoran of Mahomet in so great a part of the world has so easily prevailed.”\*

Having thus in the general shewn, that “ efficacy of doctrine” can be no note of a true Church, it necessarily follows, that the efficacy of the doctrine professed in the Church of Rome can be no note of its being so. But yet, that I may further shew what little reason that Church, of all others, has to pretend that it is the character of its being a true Church ; I desire, in the second place, that these following particulars may be considered.

1. That although we charge the Church of Rome with many errors and mistakes, yet we allow it to contain in it a mixture of truth. Now this very mixture of truth may perhaps be of sufficient force to make proselytes ; but then it does not follow but that such <sup>\*</sup>proselytes may likewise have embraced the errors which are mixed with it, as well as the truth itself. The Indians, whose conversion to the Romish faith I shall speak of afterwards, were not so void of reason, but that if they compared the religion of their conquerors with their own worship, they might be persuaded to embrace the former, rather than adhere still to the latter. And although by this means they were but half converted to the truth, yet it was better that it should be thus, than that they should not have been converted at all ; for by this means they were much nearer the reception of the whole truth than they were formerly, which was a great advantage ; and therefore we reckon those but an ill sort of Protestants, who would rather have men Turks and infidels, than of the Roman Church. But at the same time the conversion of never so many to the

\* Orat. in Scholis habita, edit. in 8vo. Ingolst. 1593.

Church of Rome, is no argument of its not being a corrupted Church, as long as we can prove it to maintain such gross errors as it does, although accompanied with such a mixture of truth, as may be of great force to bring over such as had before little or no knowledge thereof.

2. That the prevalency of the doctrine of the Church of Rome can be no note of its being a true Church, because it is so much altered from what it formerly was. The doctrine of the Church of Rome was, in the beginning of Christianity, the same with that which was delivered by Christ and his Apostles to the saints. Afterwards new doctrines insensibly crept into, and were received by that Church, and at last matters came to be settled as we now find them in the Council of Trent. This has been often cleared by learned men; and in some of those discourses which have of late been writ,\* some of the new doctrines have been traced step by step, and the manner how they came to be received set down; and in others, the Church of Rome has been compared with herself, and what was determined by the Council of Trent has been shewn to be quite another thing from what was held some ages ago. Now it is impossible that things that are different should be the distinguishing character of that which is always the same. Since then I suppose it will be readily granted, that the Church of Rome has always been the true Church, the efficacy of its doctrine can be no note thereof, since in some ages those doctrines have prevailed in it, which are directly contrary to those which have prevailed in other.

3. That the prevalency of any doctrine can be no note of a true Church, where those who embrace it are hindered from thoroughly examining it. For without a thorough examination, it never can be rightly understood; and what efficacy can it have upon his mind, who does not rightly understand it? Now the Church of Rome exacts of the members of her communion a tame submission to, and compliance with, whatever she proposeth to their belief and practice; and by forbidding them the use of the Scriptures, she takes from them the use of that rule, whereby they are to judge of the reasonableness of her proposals. How then can the reception of her doctrine be

\* Barrow of the Pope's Supremacy. Discourse of Transubstantiation. Discourse concerning the Worship of the blessed Virgin and the Saints. Discourse of Communion in one Kind. Vindication of the Answer to some late Papers, &c.

a note of her being a true Church, when perhaps not one amongst a thousand of her members who receive it is capable of understanding what he is bound to believe?

4. That the prevalency of any doctrine can be no note of a true Church, where art and force are made use of to make it prevail. For it is no difficult matter for cunning deceivers to impose upon unstable souls; and it must be a great courage and constancy of mind, which can make men forego father and mother, houses and lands, &c. for the sake of truth. Now that the Church of Rome has taken this course to propagate her doctrines, we may be assured by some of her own members: "There are," saith Erasmus, "those who, after a new example, make Christians by force; but whilst they pretend the propagation of religion, they do in reality study the enlargement of riches and power. Not unlike these are those monks who inveigle others to take upon them their order, and do use a great deal of cunning to insnare such as are young and unskilful, and who neither understand themselves nor the nature of true religion."\* And Stapleton declares very freely, "*Eo sane loco hæreses sunt, &c.* Heresies are come to that pass, that their Gordian knots are not to be dissolved by art and industry, but by the sword of Alexander; and the club of Hercules is more fit to subdue them than the harp of Apollo."† I might quote several others to the same purpose, but the constant practices of the Inquisition in those places where it is received, and the extraordinary methods which have of late been made use of in a neighbouring nation to gain proselytes, do sufficiently shew that the Church of Rome does more depend upon something else than upon the efficacy of her doctrine for the making of converts: which will more fully appear, if, in the third place, we consider the insufficiency of the Cardinal's arguments which are fetched,

First, *From the Scriptures.*

Secondly, *From what happened in the beginning of the Christian Church.*

Thirdly, *From the particular instances which he gives of conversions wrought by those of the Church of Rome.*

First, As to the Scriptures which are quoted, Psal. xix. 7, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;" and Heb. iv. 12, "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and

\* Erasmus in Annot. in Mat. 23. [vol. 6. p. 120. Lugd. Bat. 1705.]

† Stapleton. Epist. Dedic. de Oper. Justific. Edit. Paris. 1582.



sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It may be answered :

1. That the latter of these is by several expositors interpreted of the Son of God, and not of his doctrine.

2. That if they are both interpreted of the efficacy of any doctrine, yet that the efficacy which is spoken of is wholly internal, as we before observed, and consequently such as cannot be accounted a note of the true Church. For the note of a Church must be what any one can come to the knowledge of.

3. Suppose by these words was to be understood the visible prevalency of any doctrine in the world, yet it would make nothing to the Cardinal's purpose : for that which in these sacred scriptures is said to prevail, is "the word of God," "the law of the Lord," *i. e.* the true doctrine. But we deny the doctrine of the Church of Rome to be such ; and therefore these places are not applicable thereunto.

4. Were these sacred scriptures applicable to the Church of Rome, as having that true doctrine which is oftentimes so efficacious, yet the efficacy here expressed could be no note of the true Church ; since although, as has already been shewn, the true doctrine does sometimes prevail, yet it does not follow that it always should : for it may be perverted, it may be resisted, and error may meet with a much kinder reception in the world than it does.

As for what Bellarmine saith in the second place, concerning the prevalency of the Christian doctrine in the beginning of the Church, we allow it all to be true ; but we do not think the Church of Rome to be more concerned in it than any other Christian Church whatsoever. What then happened does very much confirm the Christian doctrine in the general, but does not at all prove any particular party of Christians to be better than another, much less the Church of Rome, whose doctrine, although it was once the same with the doctrine of the primitive Church, yet what it was in the Cardinal's days, and what it is now, is quite another thing from what it was then. The primitive Christians converted the heathens from their idolatry to worship the true God ; but the great design of the Catholic missionaries is, to render their proselytes entirely submissive to the Pope of Rome in all things.

I might here conclude, did not the Cardinal much insist upon the particular conversions wrought by those of the Church of

Rome ; upon some of which, in the third place, I shall make some brief reflections.

Now, as to the conversion of the English by Augustine the monk, it may be replied,

1. That the Centurists (out of whom he quotes this and the other instances) do expressly say, that Augustine,\* *eas ecclesias magis deformavit quam recte instituit.*

2. That this was not such a general conversion as seems to be pretended ; for, as has been lately cleared by a very learned man,† the faith was here planted during the Apostles' times, and in all probability by St. Paul, rather than by St. Peter, or any one else. Besides, Bede‡ gives us an account of Germanus, Lupus, and Severus coming over hither to reclaim the Britons from the heresy of Pelagius, several years before the arrival of Augustine,§ and that at his coming over several British bishops met him at Augustinsac, and stoutly refused all submission, either to the Church of Rome or to him. Lastly, Although he might be very instrumental towards the conversion of the Saxons in Kent, yet was he even in that affair mightily assisted by the authority of a Christian queen named Bertha,|| and a Christian bishop named Luidhardus.

3. That the doctrine which Augustine¶ taught, being the doctrine of Gregory the Great, is vastly different from what has been since taught in the Church of Rome.

4. That Augustine's proud carriage towards the British bishops, and the death of 1200 monks of Bangor,\*\* occasioned by their denial of subjection unto him, do sufficiently shew of what temper he was, and that he thought it lawful to make use of other means besides the efficacy of his doctrine, to promote what he was sent hither by the Pope about.††

The next mission which the Cardinal makes mention of is that of Kilianus by Pope Conon, who converted the people of Franconia, whose chief city was Herbipolis, or Wirtzburg. Now the account that the Centuriators give of this Kilianus, and which makes him not to have had that success in the con-

\* Cent. 6. c. 2. p. 37. [Basil. 1562.]

† Dr. Still. Origin. Britan. c. 1. [p. 45. Lond. 1685.]

‡ Bede, l. 1. c. 17, et 21. [Hist. Eccl. p. 54, 57. Cantab. 1722.]

§ Lib. 2. c. 2. [Ibid. p. 79.] Origin. Britan. c. 5. [Ibid.] p. 357.

|| Bede, lib. 1. c. 25. [ut supra, p. 61.]

¶ Vindication of the Answer of some late Papers, p. 72, &c.

\*\* Bede, l. 2. c. 2. [ut supra, p. 80, 81.]

†† Galfridus Monumet. Hist. Brit. l. 11. c. 12, et 13.

version of people as is pretended, is this, *viz.* that being a monk,\* and by nation a Scottish man, and not being able to do any good amongst his own countrymen with his preaching up of new rites and ceremonies, he passed over into Germany to see what he could do there; and finding that at Wirtzburg the Governor Gosbertus gave him but little encouragement, he being one who, as historians relate, did abhor those Popish ceremonies which Kilianus taught, he went to Rome, and got the Pope to make him bishop of that city, hoping that at his return thither with greater authority he should be better received, but was soon slain by his own auditors.

The third instance is, the conversion of a great part of Germany by Vinofrid, otherwise called Boniface, who seemed a little to mistrust the efficacy of his doctrine, when he thus wrote: "That without the command and awe of the Prince of the Franks he could not be able to hinder the pagan rites and idol-sacrileges in Germany:"† and as the Centuriators tell us,‡ entered the country of the Thuringi with an army, forcing them to take refuge in a fortified place: and when upon no other terms they were willing to turn Christians, but upon their being freed from paying tenths for the future to the King of Hungary, gratified them therein.

Of the conversion of the Vandals, which he ascribes to the monks of Corbie, hear the account that Albertus Krantzius gives: "The Vandals," says he, "were a nation singularly given to the superstitious worship of their idols, till by the arms of the King of Denmark by sea, by those of the Pomeranian on the east, and those of other Christian princes on the south, they were forced to become Christian."§ As to the conversion of the Danes,|| we are told that Harold being beaten by Regner, and having no other hopes, fled for help to Ludovicus the emperor, then at Mentz, who refused to assist him upon any other condition than that of his turning Christian, which he and his people accordingly did. And as for the Bulgarians, Slavonians, &c. besides that they were converted by their neighbour Greeks, as well as Italians, especially the Bulgarians (whose disturbance from some western missionaries Photius¶ passionately laments), it is not a sign that they were made so

\* Centur. Magdeb. Cent. 7. p. 516. [Basil. 1567.]

† Bonif. Ep. 3.

‡ Cent. 8. [ut supra,] p. 21, 22.

§ Lib. 1. c. 1.

|| Saxo Gram. Hist. Dan. 1. 9. p. 158. [p. 175. Soræ, 1644.] Alb. Krantzii Metrop. 1. 1. c. 19.

¶ Ep. 2.

subject to the Popea of Rome as is pretended ; since, as the Centuriators tell us, when Pope Nicholas would have obliged the Slavonians and Polonians,\* whom Cyrillus and Methodius, who converted them, had taught to have their public service in their own tongue, to have it in Latin, they stoutly resisted him. So that the Pope, that he might keep up his usurped authority, was forced to pretend that he gave them leave to have it in their own language.

But amongst all his instances, the Cardinal had least reason to have mentioned the conversion of the Indians and Jews. For as for the Indians, the unheard of cruelties which even the Popish historians relate to have been used towards them, and their gross ignorance after their conversion, are a sufficient evidence how little they were beholden for it to the doctrine which was taught them. One would wonder how it were possible for mankind to be guilty of such inhuman barbarities, as Bartolomæus Casas, who was a bishop, and lived in India, relates the Spaniards to have committed. In abhorrence whereof, Acosta has a discourse† on purpose to shew the unreasonableness of making war against the barbarians upon the account of religion. He afterwards discourses of the capacity of the Indians, asserting that they ought to have better instructors sent them : that those which they then had had been of such little use to them, that after the space of forty years there were scarce any found amongst so great a number of converts who understood two articles of the Creed,‡ or had any apprehension what Christ, eternal life, or the eucharist meant. But this concerning the conversion of the Indians has already been mentioned in note the fourth.

As for the manner of converting the Jews, I shall only make mention of one instance, which happened in the time of Heraclius the emperor, who writ to Dagobert the king of France,§ “That he would command all the Jews in his dominions to turn Christians, and either to banish or slay those who would not ; who accordingly did so, banishing as many as would not be baptized :” since Erasmus, who knew these matters well enough, has so freely declared, that although their conversion be a thing much to be wished for, yet that such courses were taken by some to effect it, that “of a wicked Jew, it often

\* Cent. 9. c. 2. col. 18. [ut supra.]

† L. 2. c. 2, &c. De Ind. salut. procur.

‡ L. 4. c. 3. p. 358.

§ Aimoin. 4. 22. [p. 346. Par. 1567.]



happened there was made a Christian much more wicked than he was before his conversion.”\*

Having thus shewn the weakness of the Cardinal's arguments, all that I shall add upon this subject shall be only this, that the mean account some of our new converts have given of themselves, and the motives of their change, looks not very favourable upon this ninth note, and makes it suspicious that the efficacy of doctrine was not the only thing that did the work. But that, on the other hand, since the chiefest patrons of the Romish cause do at this time endeavour to disguise their religion with so much artifice, and to represent it as much like ours as they can; they do really think their doctrine, by its own worth and excellency, then most likely to prevail when it is made appear to be most akin to that of the Reformed Churches.

\* Erasmi Annot. in Mat. xxiii. [ut supra.]

END OF VOL. III.





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